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A

STUDENT'S HISTORY

OF

ENGLISH LITERATURE

BY

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PREFACE

THE problems involved in the preparation of a book like this are many; their solution is often a matter of experiment. In attempting *A Student's History of English Literature*, the writer makes small claim to originality in the method of his compilation. The admirable text-books of Pancoast, of Moody and Lovett, of Halleck, and of Johnson, as well as the older standard histories, have suggested many points of practical utility; and the writer hastens to acknowledge his indebtedness to his predecessors.

In the interest of clearness the author has adopted the simplest possible division of his subject — that according to centuries; and has relied upon the subdivisions of his chapters to emphasize properly the important literary movements of each period. He has assumed that as many as possible of the essential facts in literary history should be presented to his readers. Not only should the student become acquainted with the principal movements and epochs in our literary development — not only should he be given the opportunity to gain the comprehensive view that includes forces and influences which initiate and modify them — but he should also have before him what may be called the mechanical details of the subject, — mere facts of literary record, neither picturesque nor inspiring in themselves, but indispensable even to an elementary knowledge of liter-

ary history. The writer has, therefore, followed the biographical method more closely than some authors who have briefly summarized their biographical studies and enlarged the scope of their technical criticism.

The *suggestions for study* have been prepared in the hope that they will assist both pupil and teacher in the *study* of literature. In their preparation the writer has also kept in mind the not impossible student out of school who, without professional assistance or direction, is ambitious to become really acquainted with literature as well as with its history. In these *suggestions* has been embodied such analysis and criticism as seemed reasonable in a text-book of this grade. It is probable that the courses suggested will be found in some instances more extended than the time allotted will permit; of course the teacher will be guided by his own discretion in their use. Will it not be advantageous occasionally to base the exercise entirely upon these suggested studies without requiring in the classroom a formal recitation of the biographical details given in the preliminary sketch? The author will welcome all criticism based upon practical experience with these notes.

Much of the material used in sections dealing with the romancers and novelists has been taken from chapters in the author's *Introduction to a Study of English Fiction*, published by D. C. Heath and Company. In the biographical sketch of Walter Scott and the study suggestions upon *Ivanhoe*, similar use has been made of material included in the school edition of *Ivanhoe* published by Scott, Foresman and Company. The author has drawn also, in the account of De Quincey,

upon the biographical introduction to his edition of De Quincey's *Revolt of the Tartars*, published by Ginn and Company. For the cordial permission of these houses to use this material, the writer desires to express his thanks.

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A STUDENT'S HISTORY OF ENGLISH LITERATURE

CHAPTER I

THE ANGLO-SAXON PERIOD

I. **Britain and the English.**
II. **Anglo-Saxon Poetry.**
III. **Anglo-Saxon Prose.**
IV. **The Nation and the Language.**

Literature.

By the term *Literature* is meant those written or printed compositions which preserve the thought and experience of a race recorded in artistic form. The element of beauty must be present in greater or less degree, and such works must be inspired by a purpose to afford intellectual pleasure to the one who reads them or hears them read. Books written to give information merely are not usually included in this term; text-books, scientific treatises, chronicles, reports, and similar compilations hardly belong to *literature;* but works in which the imaginative power of the writer is engaged, those which move or stir the feelings and appeal to the sense of beauty which is found in every intelligent mind — these make up the real literature of a people. Such are poems and dramas, prose works also, in which these elements

may find a place; works which are distinguished by the quality called *style*, and which reflect more or less of the personality which gave them birth. Hence it has happened frequently that books designed to inform have also partaken of these other qualities as well, and have found a permanent place in the literature of our land; such, for example, are the reviews of Macaulay, the political pamphlets of Swift and Burke, the histories of Gibbon and Hume, the narrative papers of De Quincey, the essays of Ruskin and Carlyle.

The history of our English Literature begins almost coincidently with the arrival and settlement of large companies of our Teutonic ancestors in Britain about 450 A. D.

I. BRITAIN AND THE ENGLISH.

Britain and the Romans.

So far as history records, the earliest inhabitants of Britain were a Celtic race, the Cymri. These people were not unknown to the Romans even in very early times; in B. C. 55 the island was invaded by Julius Cæsar, although at that period no permanent colony was established. In the next century new invasions followed, and for many years the island was a frequent battle-ground for the Roman legions as they advanced in their conquest of the world. Gradually their victories in Britain carried civilization well to the north, until the Roman frontier was marked by a great line of defense, crossing from the Firth of Forth to the Clyde. For four hundred years the Roman occupation continued. Britain became a colony; native citizens of Rome settled there, and their descendants remained. Permanent camps were established in places of vantage; splendid military roads were built traversing the island; the fields were tilled; the mines were worked; seaports were developed; the exports of

Britain became an important factor in the commerce of Europe. Even the luxuries of Roman life were not lacking in wealthy fortified towns like York, Lincoln, and London. However, the legions were withdrawn from Britain in 410 A. D. in order to defend the empire in Italy from the incursions of the Goths; and the decay of Roman civilization began. The rapidity of its disappearance is noteworthy. Besides the solid paving of their famous roads and the remains of their massive walls, scarcely a trace of this domination is to be found. Only a half-dozen words remain in our language as the undisputed heritage of that long period to remind us that the Latin tongue was during these four hundred years the native speech of the rulers of the land. The names of many English towns, like Chester, Winchester, Worcester, Gloucester, Lancaster, and Doncaster, preserve the Latin *castra*, a camp; the English *street* (as in *Watling Street*, the name of an ancient Roman road running north from Dover to Chester) represents, doubtless, the Latin *strata via*, a paved way; while *portus*, *fossa*, *villa*, and *vallum* may at this time have supplied the words which give us modern *port*, *fosse*, *villa*, and *wall*. The native Celts had been partially christianized as early as the third century; by the beginning of the fifth the Church in Britain had attained a decided growth, and was an institution of considerable power.

The Teutons.

Upon the withdrawal of the Roman arms, the southern part of the island was speedily overrun by fierce tribes from the highlands of the north, and by other tribes no less fierce from Ireland on the west. Invasions by the Northmen and by the Germans from the shores of the North Sea and the Baltic were frequent also on the eastern coast. Particularly these last, appearing suddenly and settling

with their white-winged ships, like swift and merciless birds of prey, were a constant menace to the dwellers along the coast, whose homes they burned, and whose property they stole away. In 449 the Britons invited aid from one of these same Teutonic tribes, and in that year a colony from Jutland, under the twin chiefs Hengest and Horsa, settled on the island of Thanet off the coast of Kent. But the Jutes themselves soon turned invaders, and as fleet followed fleet, bringing successive bands of their kinsfolk, Kent also became their possession, together with various tracts along the southern coast. Perhaps because of the success of these first-comers, perhaps because of the crowding of vigorous warlike neighbors, representatives of two other tribes, the Angles and the Saxons, peoples nearly related to the Jutes, joined in the general migration of the tribes. Dwellers originally in the low-coast countries of North Germany bordering on the North Sea, inhabiting a part of the Danish peninsula and territory extending westward as far as the mouth of the Emms, a region beset with fog and damp, and constantly exposed to the incursions of the sea, the life of these hardy Teutons was one continuous struggle with storm and flood. No wonder that in their eyes the island of Britain appeared a bright and winsome land, or that they were attracted to its sunnier shore. The ocean ways had long been familiar to them, and for generations before the final movement their adventurous bands of sea-rovers had pillaged and harried the British coasts. These tribes had much in common: they were of one parent stock, their language was practically one, their social customs and institutions were alike. Their religion was the common religion of the north. The names of our week days preserve still the memory of their gods. Wednesday is the day sacred to Woden,

the head of their mythology and the ancestor of their kings; Thor, the god of thunder and storm, is remembered in Thursday; Frig's name appears in Friday; while Tuesday takes the name of Tiw, the god of darkness and death. Prominent in their mythology is Wyrd, the genius of fate: "Goes ever Wyrd as it will," declares the hero of the epic *Beowulf*. Yet, pagans though they were, savage to cruelty in feud and war, boastful of speech, heavy eaters and deep drinkers, our Teutonic forefathers were at the same time a sturdy, healthful race, maintaining customs that were honest and wholesome, morally sound, and in many ways superior to the more cultured peoples of southern Europe.

The Home-Making.

As we have seen, the Jutes populated the eastern county of Kent; they also established settlements here and there on the southern coast. The Angles settled in the country north of that occupied by the Jutes, and built up a great kingdom known as East Anglia, a division of which into Northfolk and Southfolk is still indicated in the shires of Norfolk and Suffolk; still farther north did this English conquest move, until even Northumbria was under the English power. Meanwhile the Saxons had not lagged behind their neighbors in the conquest of the island. Successive migrations of this people had already won more than a foothold upon the southern shore, and different divisions of the tribe shared in the possession of this part of South Britain. East Saxons ruled the district lying between Kent and Suffolk, which is now called Essex; to the south of them lay the domain of the South Saxons, who have left their name in Sussex; while the more powerful kindred of the West Saxons covered the territory as far west as Cornwall, and won in time the dominion of all South England, establish-

ing the great kingdom of Wessex. Thus the history of Britain from the beginning of the fifth century to the beginning of the seventh is a confused and bloody chronicle of invasion and conquest. The Celtic race — that portion of it which was not absorbed by intermingling with the invaders — was enslaved or driven toward the west and north; those who found an abiding place among the mountains of the west were given by their Teuton conquerors the name of *Welsh*, or strangers. At the beginning of the ninth century there were four principal divisions of the English people: there were (1) the English of the north, covering the whole of Northumberland, and (2) the English of East Anglia in Norfolk and Suffolk; Kent was fairly included within the borders of (3) the West Saxons, while (4) the central division of the island, also Anglian, surrounded on three sides by these other kingdoms, and on the west by the Welsh, was known as Mercia, the country of the March, or the border.

During the ninth century a new spoiler appeared on the English coasts. The Danes began their forays on these earlier invaders, and the English peoples, who for two hundred years had been contending among themselves for leadership, were finally united into one nation under Ecgberht, King of the West Saxons, and still more securely under the great King Alfred (871–901) through the force of a common peril and common need.

These long centuries of conquest and adjustment in the history of these related German tribes may be designated as the Anglo-Saxon Period; it extends from the arrival of Hengest and Horsa in 449 to the invasion of the Normans under William in 1066, and thus covers the space of a little more than six hundred years.

ENGLAND
IN THE
ANGLO-SAXON AGE.
A 4 B 2 C 0 D
a 56 b 54 c 52 d 50 e
R. Forth
Edinburgh
R. Clyde
R. Tweed
STRATHCLYDE
NORTHUMBRIA
R. Tyne
Jarrow
Monkwearmouth
Whitby
R. Solway
R. Tees
Hilton Wall
ISLE OF MAN
IRISH SEA
York
DANELAGH
R. Humber
R. Dee
Chester
Lincoln
Trent
Peterborough
NORTH WALES
MERCIA
NORFOLK
EAST ANGLIA
SUFFOLK
Cambridge
Isle of Ely
WATLING STREET
R. Severn
Worcester
R. Avon
Gloucester
Oxford
Colchester
ESSEX
MIDDLESEX
London
R. Thames
ISLE OF THANET
Rochester
Canterbury
KENT
R. Severn
Ethandun
WESSEX
Winchester
SUSSEX
Stonehenge
Athelney
Salisbury
Hastings
New Forest
Exeter
WEST WALES
ISLE OF WIGHT
ENGLISH CHANNEL
NORMANDY
Longitude West 2 from Greenwich

II. ANGLO-SAXON POETRY.

The Scop.

These fair-skinned, blue-eyed English folk were, from the first, lovers of song and story. The very relics of their earliest art preserve the scene and spirit of their recreation. Fierce in fight, often merciless in the pursuit of a conquered foe, they loved the gleam of their own hearth-fire and the coarse comfort of the great Saxon hall, with its heavy tables and crowded benches. Here at night the troop gathered, carousing, in some interval of peace. The earl himself, at the high table set crosswise at one end of the huge hall, had before him his noisy band of vassals thronging the mead-benches. The blaze of the hearth-fire in their midst lights up the faces of these ruddy, strong-limbed warriors; it flashes on spear and axe, and is reflected from the armor, curiously woven of link-mail, which grotesquely decorates the walls, half hidden by shaggy skins of wolf and bear. The noisy feasting is followed by a lull. The harp appears. Perhaps the lord of the household himself receives it, and in vigorous tones chants in time with the twanging chords some epic of his ancestors, or boasts of his own fierce deeds. Perhaps the instrument is passed from hand to hand while thane after thane unlocks the "word-hoard" of his memory as he may. But most frequently it is the professional scop, or gleeman, who strikes the rhythmic notes, and takes up the burden of the tale; he has a seat of honor near his lord; to him the rough audience listens spellbound; he sways their wild spirits at his will.

> "There was chant and harp-clang together
> In presence of Healfdene's battle-scarred heroes.
> The glee-wood was welcomed, tales oft recounted
> When Hrothgar's scop, delight of the dwelling
> After the mead-bout, took up the telling.
> . . . . . .

The song was sung out
The gleeman's tale ended. Spirits soared high
Carousing reëchoed."[1]

Widsith, or Far-farer, may have been the name of such a singer, whose fame is preserved in what is apparently the very oldest of Old English poems extant. It is preserved in the so-called *Exeter Book*, a priceless volume of Anglo-Saxon manuscript, presented to the Cathedral at Exeter by Bishop Leofric (1046–73), still in the possession of the cathedral. Sometimes called *The Scop*, or *The Traveller's Song*, this ancient poem catalogues the wanderings of the gleeman. Widsith and Deor.

"Widsith unlocked his word-hoard; and then spake
He among men whose travel over earth
Was farthest through the tribes and through the folks:
Treasure to be remembered came to him
Often in hall.
Among the Myrgings, nobles gave him berth.
In his first journey he, with Ealhhild,
The pure peace-maker, sought the fierce king's home,
Eastward of Ongle, home of Eormanric,
The wrathful treaty-breaker."[2]

Hermanric, the great king of the Goths, died before the close of the fourth century; and if Widsith told his own story, as parts of the poem indicate, we have here a composition dating from the period before the migration, although the long catalogue of kings and heroes contains some names which mark a later generation and prove the interpolation of a later hand.

"Thus wandering, they who shape songs for men
Pass over many lands, and tell their need,
And speak their thanks, and ever, south or north,
Meet some one skilled in songs and free in gifts,
Who would be raised among his friends to fame
And do brave deeds till light and life are gone.

[1] *Beowulf*, ll. 1063–1067, 1159–1161.
[2] Morley's translation, *English Writers*, vol. ii.

He who has thus wrought himself praise shall have
A settled glory underneath the stars."[1]

So *Widsith* concludes. A companion poem, dating apparently from the same early period, presents the scop in a more melancholy mood. This is *Deor's Lament*, the composition of some singer who has felt more of the bitterness of life, having been superseded in the favor of his lord by some cleverer scop, and now lingers late on earth after most of his comrades and patrons have gone.

"Whilom was I Scop of the Heodenings:
Dear unto my lord! *Deor* was my name.
Well my service was to me many winters through;
Loving was my lord; till at last Heorrenda —
Skilled in song the man! — seized upon my land-right
That the guard of Earls granted erst to me.
That, one overwent; *this*, also may I."[2]

Beowulf.

But by far the most interesting and impressive example of early English art is found in our great Anglo-Saxon epic, three thousand lines in length, which preserves out of the distant past the mythical career of Beowulf, prince of the Geats. The form of the epic as we know it appears to have been the work of a Northumbrian poet in either the eighth or ninth century. It embodies various legends reported in earlier songs, the first of which were undoubtedly composed on the Continent, probably by poets of Angle-land. An interesting feature of this final version, which possesses the unity of the genuine epic along with the other characteristics of such compositions, is that it represents the work of a Christian writer who has sought to modify the paganism of its earlier narrative by injecting something of the religious spirit of his own time into the grim mythology of the older lay.

[1] Morley, *English Writers*, vol. ii.
[2] Stopford Brooke, *History of Early English Literature*.

The title of the poem repeats the name of its hero. Beowulf is a typical champion, endowed with superhuman strength, sagacity, courage, and endurance; moreover, in common with the heroes of this type, he is foreordained to relieve the ills of those who have great need, and is always ready to respond to their necessity. The story is this: —

The Tale.

Hrothgar, the Dane, far-famed for his victories, for his justice and generosity no less, grown old in years, builds for his warriors a great mead-hall. There the gray-haired chieftain assembles his vassals for feasting and mirth; but an unheard-of horror comes upon Heorot, great "hall of the hart," which Hrothgar has built. Out from the fens, when night falls, stealthily creeps the bog-monster Grendel; enters the new house where the earls after carousal lie asleep on the benches. One and another and another of Hrothgar's men is attacked and devoured by the demon; night after night Grendel devastates the mead-hall. No one of Hrothgar's thanes is brave enough or strong enough to cope with the monster. Heorot is deserted, and the old chief sits gloomily in his former home to mourn in silence the loss of men and of honor. Up in the Northland Hygelac's thane, Beowulf, young, bold, robust, already famous for a daring feat in swimming, and destined to be Hygelac's heir and successor, hears of Hrothgar's plight and of Grendel. Soon, with a band of chosen men, Beowulf travels southward, follows "the whale-path," "the swan-road," until his ship strikes the shore of Hrothgar's kingdom. The coast-guard, first descried sitting his horse like a statue, gallops to meet the strangers and challenges their landing. Beowulf is conducted to Hrothgar and declares his purpose to kill the monster and free the land. Gladly does the Dane listen and generous welcome does he

make for the Northmen. Night comes, and once more is Heorot ablaze with the light of the hearth-fire and noisy with the merriment of revel. Wassail is drunk, tales are told, bold boasts are made; but hardly have the shouts died away, and the revelers disposed themselves to sleep on the benches, when the fearful fen-dragon approaches: he has heard the noise of feasting from afar, and now he steals toward the hall, laughing as he thinks of his prey. The fire has died out; the hall is in darkness. One of Hrothgar's men is seized and devoured. Raging, with lust for flesh aroused, Grendel grasps another in his claws; but it is the hero whom the bog-monster has unwittingly caught, and now Beowulf, roused for vengeance, starts up to battle with Grendel. Unarmed, the hero grapples with his enemy. The hall sways with the shock of the fighting. He clutches Grendel by the wrist; never had the monster felt a grasp like that. The muscles ache, the cords of the demon's arms are snapping, the shoulder is torn from the socket; the weary marsh-dweller gropes his way blindly forth, and weakly wends toward his foul home in the swamp-land. Grendel is wounded to the death. Beowulf rests after victory, and shows the hideous claw, his war trophy, to the Danes. Great joy comes to Hrothgar with the dawn, but with the night woe returns. Grendel's mother now issues from the death-breeding marshes, and invades the hall of Heorot. Once more there is wailing among the thanes, once more sorrow sits in Hrothgar's house; but once again Beowulf girds himself for battle. With his faithful followers, the hero now invades the fatal fen-land itself; he stands upon the shore of the mist-covered inlet where the marsh-demons breed. Strange and loathsome shapes appear, half shrouded in fog; nixies and sea-dragons sprawl on the rocks or beat the water glar-

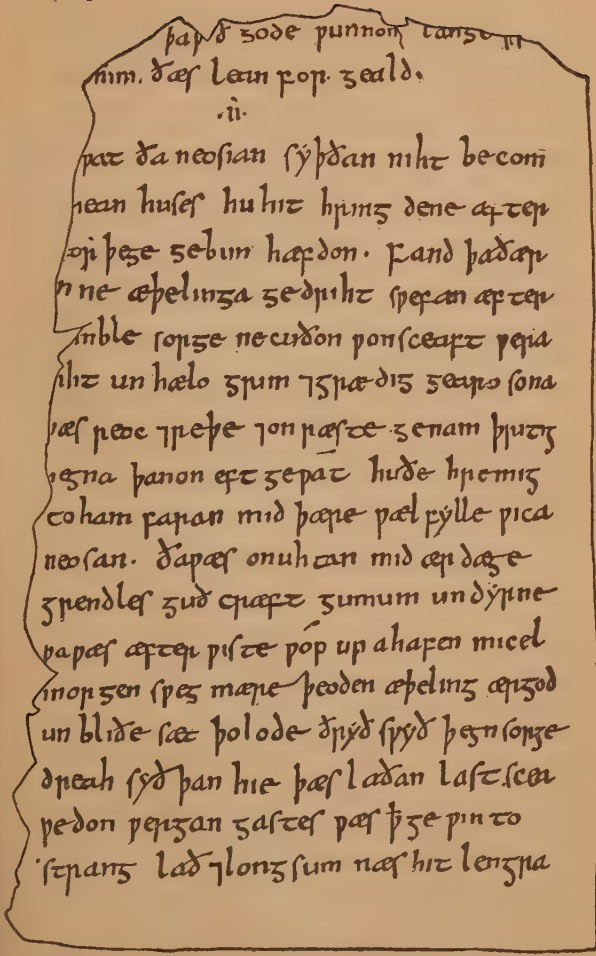
ing at the hero from the cloudy waves of the mere. Here Beowulf equips himself, puts on his best corselet, grasps the strongest brand; then he enters the dark water, presses down through the flood, beset by the sea-monsters, bruised by their sharp tusks, undaunted, down, down to the dwelling of the monsters, where the fierce she-demon waits. Meanwhile his men keep watch and ward above; gloom settles on them; doubt fills their hearts with dread. The day drags by; no sight of their hero. Still they wait, and silent stare on the sea. Now a commotion stirs the thick water; the surface boils under the mists; blood rolls up red through the foam, and Beowulf's men yield to grief and despair. But soon the grief gives way to gladness, for the hero himself emerges from the horrible flood, bringing news of the she-demon's slaughter and a new trophy, Grendel's head; this it was that sent the red blood welling up through the mere depths when Beowulf smote Grendel's dead body. Loud is the rejoicing; triumphantly do the Northmen give the Danes warning of their home-coming. Rich are the gifts bestowed by Hrothgar; great is the feasting. Then Beowulf's followers remember the home-land; the "slippery sea-rover" is launched, the warriors embark with their presents, Beowulf says farewell to Hrothgar, and steers north to Hygelac's kingdom.

Beowulf achieves another adventure. Now he is old: as Hygelac's successor, fifty winters he has ruled well and wisely; his land has prospered, but an enemy now destroys his men, and by night the land is laid waste. This time it is a fire-drake with which Beowulf must battle; and the hero goes forth, dauntless as ever, to meet the monster. But now his men prove cowards; the hero is left alone to fight with the dragon, — alone but for Wiglaf, who stands behind his lord's shield and

helps as he may. Long they fight, monster and man; this is no Grendel, this fire-spurter. The fierce heat shrivels up the shield, the heroes are hard pressed; but at last Wiglaf disables the dragon, Beowulf gives the deathblow. But Beowulf, too, has been hurt and, though victor, lies sick of his death-wound. Then Wiglaf brings forth the hoard from the cave where the worm had so long guarded it, and Beowulf feasts his eyes ere they close upon the vast treasure he bequeaths to his people. The hero is dead: rear his funeral pyre! Upon the tall promontory, a beacon to sailors, friends burn the body; with the roar of the flames mingle death-chant and wailing.

Such are the stories that children usually delight in; thus in the childhood of our race was this tale told. Perhaps under the mists of their swampy, sea-swept land, the rush of the storm and the more subtle attacks of malarious fevers may be grotesquely and fancifully shadowed forth, evaded only by the courage and wisdom of some hero who builds the dikes or drains the marshes; but after all the main fact is that our Anglo-Saxon forefathers approved the qualities idealized in this hero of the epic, and honored in him the stout-hearted men of their race who contended not only with flesh and blood, but with those mysterious hosts, those uncanny powers of sea and air, whose existence they assumed, but whose nature and form lay hidden in the darkness of fog and night. The poem of *Beowulf* supplies many vivid picturings of early English life and manners; the hero of the poem is really the idealization of the Anglo-Saxon himself. That there is an historical basis for the myth is hardly to be doubted. The name of Hygelac is identified with that of Cochilaicus (a northern chieftain who was slain in battle about the year 520). In the latter part

Significance of the Epic.



REDUCED FACSIMILE OF A PAGE OF BEOWULF MANUSCRIPT IN THE BRITISH MUSEUM

of the poem there is evidently a mingling of the story with the myth of Siegfried and the dragon of the Rhinegold, Faffner. Of the feats ascribed to Beowulf, the account of a remarkable swimming match described in the poem may easily be based on fact, and the incident of the hand-to-hand struggle with sea-monsters and the plunge downward to the submarine cave is not so wholly incredible as it might seem.

The Metrical Form.

There is but a single manuscript of the Beowulf poem, greatly damaged by fire and age, now preserved in the British Museum. There are 3180 lines in the poem, and it is worth while to examine its form somewhat in detail. The epic begins thus: —

"Hwæt! we Gar-Dena
þeod-cyninga,
hu þa æðelingas
Oft Scyld Scefing
monegum mægþum
(egsode eorl),
fea-sceaft funden;
weox under wolcnum,
oð þæt him æghwylc
ofer hron-rade
gomban gyldan

in gear-dagum
þrym gefrunon,
ellen fremedon.
sceaþena þreatum,
meodo-setla ofteah.
Syððan ærest wearð
he þæs frofre gebad,
weorð-myndum þah,
þara ymb-sittendra
hyran scolde,
þæt wæs god cyning!"

"Lo! we of the Spear-Danes
Of warrior kings
How the princes
Oft Scyld, son of Scef,
From many kindreds,
The Earl inspired terror
Helpless, a waifling;
Waxed under the welkin,
Until to him each
Over the whale-road
Tribute paid:

in days of yore
the fame have heard;
mighty deeds wrought.
from hosts of foes,
the mead-benches took;
after first he was found
he for that comfort found later,
in honors throve.
of those dwelling around him
obedience gave,
that was a goodly king!"

Then follows the genealogy of Hrothgar, builder of Heorot and victim of Grendel's rage.

The characteristic structure of Anglo-Saxon verse is illustrated in the passage given. The composition is metrical, although the number of syllables in one verse may vary from that in another. While there is no end-rhyme in these verses, there is a recurrence of consonants which forms a rhyme in the body of the verse; this repetition of initial sounds is called *alliteration*, and this is the most conspicuous feature of Anglo-Saxon poetry. The common type of verse is found in lines 4, 5, 7, 8, 11, where two syllables alliterating in the first half-verse are followed by one such in the second. The alliteration is a mark of emphasis always, but the position of these emphatic syllables is not uniform. Sometimes, as in lines 2, 10, a single syllable in the first half-verse alliterates with one in the second; such a double correspondence as occurs in line 1 is rare. In lines 3, 6, 9 vowel alliteration occurs, and this does not require that the vowels shall be the same. Read or chanted by the gleeman, a pronounced rhythm was imparted to the lines, emphasized by the pauses and the accents, which were strongly marked. Recited thus with resonant tones to the rhythmical twang of the harp-cord, this which seems so rude and hoarse became a vigorous, not unmelodious song.

The Spirit and Tone of Anglo-Saxon Poetry.

The most striking characteristic of Anglo-Saxon poetry is the rough vigor, the intense energy, of its homely but effective style. There is virile strength and power in its movement, its emphasis, imagery, and theme. If one reads these ancient memorials of our forefathers intelligently and in a mood sympathetic with their half-wild, half-cultured spirit, he will be captivated by the sweep and power of their verse. The imagery of the early gleemen is rich in metaphors, metonymy, and personification. The ocean is poetically termed the

"whale-path," the "swan-road;" the ship is described as the "wave-traverser," the "floater, foamy-necked, like to some sea-fowl;"[1] the gleeman's repertory is his "word-hoard;" the sun becomes "God's bright candle," "heaven's gem;" swords "bite," the war-horn "sings;" Hrothgar is called the "helm" of the Scyldings. In descriptive passages the poet loved to let his fancy play about his theme, reintroducing the idea, but turning his phrase to let light fall upon it from some other side. Thus, in describing the hero's preparation for his encounter with the sea-wife, the poet says: —

"Beowulf girded him,
Wore his war-armor; not for life was he anxious.
The linked coat of mail, the hand-woven corselet
Broad and gold-embossed, should breast the deep currents;
That which the bone-chamber well should protect,
That his breast by the battle-grip might not be bruised,
The attack of the terror bring scath to his body.
But the white-shining helmet guarded his head;
This mid the mere-depths with sea-waves should mingle,
With treasure adorned should dart through the surges,
Encircled with gems, as in days that are bygone
The weapon-smith wrought it, wondrously worked it,
A boar's crest above it that never thereafter
Brand might it bite or battle-sword harm it."[2]

Naturally enough these early English poets were inspired by the deeds of warriors, and their work is full not only of battle scenes, but also of the imagery of war. In nature they were impressed by the elemental phenomena of storm and climate, — the descent of winter, the birth of spring. As they delighted in the narrative of conflict, so they loved to picture man's struggle with the sea and to sing of the ocean in all its varying moods: —

[1] *Beowulf*, l. 218.

[2] *Ibid.* ll. 1441–1454. Compare also the parallelisms in Cædmon's hymn, p. 22.

"The wild rise of the waves,
The close watch of night
At the dark prow in danger
Of dashing on rock.
. . . . . .
The wide joy of waters
The whirl of salt spray.
. . . . . .
There is no man among us
So proud in his mind,
Nor so good in his gifts,
Nor so gay in his youth,
Nor so daring in deeds,
Nor so dear to his lord
That his soul never stirred
At the thought of sea-faring."[1]

The reëstablishment of Christianity in Britain introduced a new epoch in English life and literature. While among the native Cymri there were many who had adopted the Christian religion, largely through the ministration of Irish missionaries, the Anglo-Saxons themselves continued in the worship of Woden and Thor, and in many parts of England the older native paganism of the Druids was still maintained. But in the year 597 Augustine, the Apostle to the Saxons as he was called, sent from Rome by Pope Gregory I., landed on that little isle of Thanet, where a hundred and fifty years earlier Hengest and Horsa had gained their first foothold on the British coast; by the end of the year this missionary had baptized ten thousand Saxon converts. He was consecrated archbishop, founded the Cathedral church at Canterbury, and died there in 604. Under the teaching of Paulinus, Aidan, and others, Northumbria was gradually won for the faith.[2] Communities of

The Conversion of the Saxons.

[1] The *Seafarer*, Morley's translation, *English Writers*, vol. ii.

[2] Several interesting traditions of the conversion of Edwin's folk and the parable of the sparrow are pleasantly told by Wordsworth, *Ecclesiastical Sonnets*, xiii., xiv., xv., xvi.

devotees, where both men and women piously inclined gathered for religious fellowship and a consecrated life, were established, and in time became seats of learning as well as centres of religious zeal. Very ancient was the famous community of monks established by Columba, the Irish exile, on the island of Iona, off the western coast of Scotland; in a sense Iona was the mother of the new religious settlement at Lindisfarne, or Holy Island, on the bleak Northumbrian coast, where Aidan placed his seat. In 657, at Whitby, on the Yorkshire cliffs overlooking the North Sea, Hilda founded her community of Streoneshalh. In 673 a band of monks settled at Ely, in Cambridgeshire. Peterborough began the building of its great abbey about ten years later, and Jarrow, ever associated with the fame of Bede, had its beginning at about this time. With the growth of Christian sentiment a new spirit appears in Anglo-Saxon literature. Old motives are curiously adapted to the new ends. The glory of conflict still occupies the mind of the poet, warfare and bloodshed are still described, but the material is drawn from Hebrew history, or from the lives of saints and martyrs. The old fatalism of the Teutons is greatly modified, and the melancholy of the pagan gives place to the Christian's hopefulness and faith. Thus, in a long religious poem of the eighth century, we find passages like this: —

"I have heard the fame of a land far hence;
Eastward it lies, loveliest of lands
Known among men. Not easy of access
To many earth-dwellers, who this mid-region traverse,
Is this favored retreat, but far is it removed
Through the Creator's might from ill-minded men.
Fair are its fields, full of delights;
Fragrant with fairest odors of earth.
There is no land like this land; marvelous its Maker,
Proud, rich in power, he who thus planned it!

There is oft granted to the blessed together
Harmonies glorious, Heaven's gates flung wide open.
That is a winsome land; wide wave its forests
Green neath the sky. Nor may there rain nor snow,
Neither frost's bite nor fire's blast,
Neither hail's dart nor hoar-frost's blight,
Neither blazing heat nor bitter cold,
Neither hot wind, nor winter storm
Work wrong to any; but this wonder-land
Seemeth blessed and blissful, a-blossom with bloom." [1]

Cædmon, died 680.

With the first appearance of this new motive in our literature, we make acquaintance with the personality of our first native English poet whose name is preserved, — the humble singer whose interesting story has been told by Bæda, or Bede, in his *Historia Ecclesiastica*, compiled within some sixty years of this singer's death. According to Bede, there was living in the monastery at Whitby, in the time of the Abbess Hilda, who had founded the community in 657, a lay brother by the name of Cædmon. This man was of mature age, unlearned, and employed on common menial tasks. Without skill in song or improvisation, Cædmon was compelled to keep silence when the harp passed from hand to hand at the evening merry-makings, where each was expected to assist in the general entertainment. Sometimes, says Bede, when he saw the harp coming near him he rose from the table and silently slipped away. One evening thus he betook himself to the stables, the care of the cattle having been for that night assigned to him. Here he slept, and as he slept some one stood by him and saluted him, calling him by name: "Cædmon," said he, "sing me something!" But he replied, "I know not how to sing; since for that very reason I have left the company, because I cannot sing." And

[1] *The Phœnix*, II. 1–20; attributed to Cynewulf. The first part of this poem is a paraphrase of a Latin original.

the one who talked with him said: "Nevertheless you shall sing to me." "What shall I sing?" he asked. Then that one replied: "Sing the beginning of created things." Then Cædmon arose and sang in praise of God the Creator verses of which this is the sense: "Now we ought to praise the Author of the Heavenly kingdom, the power of the Creator, and his counsel, the deeds of the Father of Glory. How He, the Eternal God, of all wonders the Author became; who first for the children of men created Heaven for a roof, then the earth, Guardian of the human race, the Almighty." This is the sense, says Bede, but not the order of the words which he sang.[1]

Cædmon's Works.

This was the vision; in the morning Cædmon remembered his dream and was able to recite the verses he had uttered while asleep. Hilda, the abbess, greatly interested in Cædmon's

[1] This important work of Bede was afterward translated by King Alfred from the Latin into the Anglo-Saxon tongue (see page 34). In the text Alfred incorporated the following version of Cædmon's hymn, which possibly retains in large part the "order" as well as the "sense" of the original song. It may at all events serve to illustrate further the fashion of Anglo-Saxon verse. (Zupitza's reading is used.)

"Nu sculan herigean heofonrices weard,
Meotodes meahte ond his modgethanc,
Weorc wuldorfæder, swa he wundra gehwæs,
Ece drihten, or onstealde.
He ærest sceop eorthan bearnum
Heofon to hrofe, halig scyppend:
Tha middangeard, moncynnes weard,
Ece drihten, æfter teode
Firum, foldan, frea ælmihtig."

Translation.

"Now ought we to worship the Warder of Heaven,
The might of the Creator and His mighty thought;
The work of the glorious Father; how he of every wonder,
Eternal Lord, — a beginning made.
He first created for the children of earth
Heaven for a roof, — holy Creator;
Then the mid-region, — Guardian of mankind;
The Eternal Lord afterward established
For men the earth; Ruler Almighty."

story, directed the unlearned man to come daily to the monastery, where the monks told him the narrative of sacred history. "Then Cædmon meditated all that he heard and, like a clean animal ruminating, turned it into sweetest verse. And his songs were so winsome to hear that his teachers themselves wrote down his words and learned from him."[1] Then Cædmon himself became a monk, and inspired by this poetic fire so mysteriously kindled, paraphrased the accounts of *Genesis* and *Exodus*, together with many other portions of the Scripture narrative. "Not at all from men was it," says Bede, "nor instructed by man, that he learned the song-craft; but he was divinely inspired and by God's gift he received the power of song; therefore he never would compose fanciful or idle verses, but only those which pertain to righteousness, and which it became his pious tongue to sing." Many others in England began to write religious poetry after Cædmon's time, but none could compare with him. Such was Bede's judgment of this first poet of the soil, who sang because he was commanded. Thus has it ever been when the unaffected poetry of nature has its birth.

Cynewulf, born about 750.

Aside from Cædmon, the only one of the Old English poets known to us by name is Cynewulf, a writer of great influence and a poet of genuine power. Yet Cynewulf's actual personality and the details of his life are so obscured by the shadows of a distant past that there is more of conjecture than of certainty in the accepted narrative of his career. His work must have fallen about a century after Cædmon's. We are assured that he, too, was a Northumbrian. Unlike the older singer of such humble origin, Cynewulf was from the first a mover in

[1] King Alfred's Anglo-Saxon version of Bede's *Historia*.

courtly circles, — in one of his poems he tells us as much, — was perhaps of noble lineage, at least a thane or a retainer of some high lord. With the experiences of the warrior he must have been familiar, for his war-scenes are realistic, and the spirit of the soldier speaks in the vividness of his narrative. A traveler who knew the sea and had been in distant lands, a scholar to whom the Latin tongue was familiar, a gentleman well-trained in the accomplishments of his time — all these Cynewulf seems to have been, withal participating freely, as a youth, in the pleasures and excitements of a worldly life. He may have been the author of a series of one hundred riddles in verse, but this is doubtful. At least four ambitious works are identified by his own autograph as indisputably his. These are the *Life of St. Juliana*, the *Fates of the Apostles*, the *Elene*, and the *Christ*. In each of these poems, runes, ingeniously inserted in the text, spell out the poet's name. In addition to these known works, a *Life of St. Guthlac*, a similar one of *Andreas*, and a paraphrase of a Latin poem by Lactantius entitled *The Phœnix* are with several minor poems also attributed to Cynewulf. Of all these the *Elene*, the *Christ*, and the *Phœnix* are among the best productions of Anglo-Saxon poetry. Cynewulf had turned from his worldly life, had possibly become a monk; at any rate had thrown his talent with all his heart and soul into the effort to exalt the Christian faith and to sing the glory of the Cross. In the *Dream of the Rood*, certainly the composition of this writer, is told the story of a vision somewhat like that of Cædmon, in which the dreamer sees the sacred tree, glittering now with gold and jewels, now stained with blood, and speaking of the precious fruit it had borne. The singer is bidden declare this sight to sinful men and to reveal both

what has been and what shall be. The *Elene* narrates the story of Helena, mother of Constantine, and her finding of the true Cross. In the *Christ* we find three separate poems wherein Cynewulf describes the Advent, the Ascension, and the Day of Judgment. The following passage from the second section of this work, besides illustrating the style of Cynewulf's composition, will make clear the poet's use of runes by means of which he weaves his own name into the text. The words in CAPITALS represent pretty closely the meanings which these single characters commonly represent.

Cynewulf's Verse.

"Then shall the COURAGEOUS tremble; he shall hear the King, the Ruler of Heaven, speak stern words unto those who in time past ill obeyed Him on earth, while as yet they could easily find comfort for their YEARNING and their NEED. There in that place shall many a one, weary and sore afraid, await what dire punishment He will mete out to them for their deeds. Gone is the WINSOMENESS of earth's adornments. Long ago the portion of Life's joys granted US was compassed about by LAKE-FLOODS, our FORTUNE on the earth. Then shall our treasures burn in fire; bright and swift shall the red flame rage; fiercely shall it rush through the wide world. Plains shall perish, citadels fall. The fire shall be all astir; pitilessly shall that greediest of spirits waste the ancient treasure which men held of old, whilst pride abode with them upon the earth."[1]

Although too subjective to be classified as epics, the religious poems of Cynewulf are most characteristic as well as most impressive in those passages which introduce the themes of action. Highly suggestive are these lines from the *Elene* which describe the voyage of

[1] From *The Christ of Cynewulf*, translated into English prose by C. H. Whitman (Ginn).

the queen and her company on their way to seek the Cross. True to his environment and the instincts of the Teuton, Cynewulf shares with the many unidentified singers among his people the Anglo-Saxon love of the sea, is familiar with the experiences of the mariner, and has caught the spirit and the tone of the resounding waves.

"Gan with speed the crowd of earls
Hasten to ship. The steeds of the sea
'Round the shore of the ocean ready were standing,
Cabled sea-horses, at rest on the water.
Then plainly was known the voyage of the lady,
When the welling of waves she sought with her folk.
There many a proud one at Wendel-sea
Stood on the shore. They severally hastened
Over the mark-paths, band after band,
And then they loaded with battle-sarks,
With shields and spears, with mail-clad warriors,
With men and women, the steeds of the sea.
Then they let o'er the billows the foamy ones go,
The high wave-rushers. The hull oft received
O'er the mingling of waters the blows of the waves.
The sea resounded. Not since nor ere heard I
On water-stream a lady lead,
On ocean-street, a fairer force.
There might he see, who that voyage beheld,
Burst o'er the bath-way, the sea-wood, hasten
'Neath swelling sails, the sea-horse play,
The wave-floater sail. The warriors were blithe,
Courageous in mind; queen joyed in her journey."[1]

The Manuscripts.

In addition to the manuscript of *Beowulf* already mentioned, our principal source of acquaintance with Anglo-Saxon poetry is found in two famous collections, known respectively as the *Exeter Book* and the *Vercelli Book*. The first of these treasures has been in the library of the cathedral at Exeter since the time of Bishop Leofric (1046–73); the other was discovered in 1822 at the Monastery of Vercelli in

[1] From the *Elene*, translated by J. M. Garnett (Ginn), ll. 225–247.

Italy by a German student. This latter volume contains the *Andreas*, the *Elene*, the *Dream of the Rood*, the *Fates of the Apostles* (all supposed to be by Cynewulf), and two *Addresses of the Soul to the Body* Twenty-two sermons are also included in this volume. *The Exeter Book* preserves the manuscripts (copies made in Leofric's time) of Cynewulf's *Christ*, *Juliana*, and *St. Guthlac*, also a second *St. Guthlac* by another monkish writer, the *Phœnix*, ascribed to Cynewulf, two shorter poems of great merit, the *Wanderer* and the *Seafarer*, *Widsith*, *Deor's Complaint*, and several minor didactic poems, with a collection of metrical proverbs. One fragment of verse is of unique interest as presenting almost the sole example of anything like romantic sentiment in the whole body of Anglo-Saxon poetry.

> "Dear the welcomed one
> To the Frisian wife, when the Floater 's drawn on shore,
> When his keel comes back, and her churl returns to home,
> Her's, her own food-giver. And she prays him in,
> Washes then his weedy coat, and new weeds puts on him,
> O lythe it is on land to him, whom his love constrains." [1]

Battle Narratives in Verse.

Of an entirely different order from the poetry just described are two stirring accounts of actual battles, incorporated in the *Annals* of Winchester, which belong in the important prose history known as the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*. The first of these poems describes the Battle of Brunnanburh in the year 937, when King Æthelstan, together with his brother Eadmund, "won life-long fame with the edges of swords" in battle with the Scots and Danes. The poem is especially rich in that vigorous imagery peculiar to the Anglo-Saxon gleeman when singing of conflict.

[1] *Gnomic Verses*, translated by Stopford A. Brooke, *Early English Literature*.

"The board-wall[1] they battered.
The linden-wood[1] hewed, with leavings of hammers.
. . . . . .
The field was made fat
With blood of brave warriors, after sun brightly rose
At morning-tide, — that marvellous star,
God's gleaming candle, over ground glided, —
Until the Creator's noble creation
Sank to his seat. . . .
. . . . . .
They left then behind them to hold horrid banquet
That black-feathered bird, horny-beaked,
The swart raven; and the gray-coated robber,
White-feathered behind, to feast on the carrion,
The greedy war-hawk; and that gray wanderer,
The wolf in the wood."

The poem consists of seventy-three lines; its companion piece, the *Song of the Fight of Maldon*, in the year 991, is a longer composition, and although incomplete in the text preserved, numbers 325 lines as it stands. It recounts the story of the battle and the death of Byrhtnoth, an East Saxon ealdorman in the time of Æthelred "the Unready."

Epic Fragments.

While not all the extant productions of scop and gleeman are recorded in this volume, there are three important fragments which should be mentioned. These are *Waldhere*, *The Fight at Finnesburg*, and *Judith*. Of the first of these we have but a portion, sixty-two lines in length; the manuscript apparently belongs to the eighth century, and is evidently a copy of a distinctly German epic known and sung by the English. The story of Finn and the destruction of his stronghold is as truly an English epic as is the *Beowulf* itself; indeed, the fragment of some fifty verses is supplemented by a narrative of a hundred lines introduced in *Beowulf* as the song of

[1] By both these terms the *shields* are described; the *leavings of hammers* are the *swords*, beaten into shape and tempered by the smith.

Hrothgar's scop. *Judith*, of which three spirited cantos are preserved, was one of the great epic compositions of our early literature. It has been unnecessarily attributed to Cynewulf, but belongs to a later generation. It contains the apocryphal history of Judith and Holofernes.

III. ANGLO-SAXON PROSE.

Verse precedes Prose as a Literary Form.

The earliest monuments of our literature we have found to be in verse. This happens naturally. In the first place, compositions which are to be preserved by tradition rather than by letter, either printed or written, will be more easily retained and transmitted in metrical form. Secondly, in a society which honors the profession of the bard, the rhythm and ornament of verse are a welcome feature of the recitation. But most important of all is the historical fact that in the childhood of any people, poetry is the more natural, almost the spontaneous form adopted by those who are moved to express thought or emotion with any effort toward artistic effect. Such utterance comes in moments of exaltation, unpremeditated. In these moods men become poets in spite of themselves. Prose composition is a later and more labored development.

Bede, 673-735.

The earliest Anglo-Saxon prose of any literary value seems to have been a single work of the learned and pious Northumbrian monk, Bæda, or Bede, to whose name the title of "Venerable" was affectionately added by the pupil who cut the epitaph above his master's grave at Durham. Bede was born near Wearmouth, on the Durham coast. An orphan, seven years old, he entered the monastery of St. Peter's to study for the priesthood, and two or three years later removed to the associated monastery of St.

Paul's at Jarrow, close at hand. Here he remained for the rest of his life, devoted to his study and the composition of his numerous works in Latin. Jarrow possessed at this time one of the best libraries in Europe, and Bede himself was famous over Christendom for his learning and his books. Six hundred pupils listened to the instruction of this scholar and assisted him in his work. He wrote books on grammar, mathematics, and natural science, commentaries on the Scriptures, lives of the saints, church history, treatises on philosophy, and, besides other works, made metrical versions of the *Psalms*. "I wholly applied myself to the study of Scripture," says Bede, "and amidst the observance of regular discipline, and the daily care of singing in the church, I always took delight in learning, teaching, and writing." His most important work is the *Historia Ecclesiastica*, an ecclesiastical or church history of Britain. It is here that we find the account of Cædmon and his dream. But the forty-odd Latin works of this pious scholar are not the occasion of so much interest as is the single text, unhappily lost, produced by Bede in his own vernacular, — a translation of the *Gospel of St. John*. This was Bede's last work; coincidently with its completion came his death. One of the brothers in the monastery, Cuthbert, reverently records the manner of the end. "He passed the day joyfully till the evening, when his scribe said, 'Dear master, there is yet one sentence not written.' He answered, 'Write quickly.' Soon after, the boy said, 'The sentence is now written.' He replied, 'It is well; you have said the truth. It is ended.' And soon thereafter he breathed his last."

Scholarship in England.

In the time of Bede, and for a century thereafter, Anglo-Saxon scholarship was preëminent in Europe. The English monasteries were many

of them famous for their libraries of manuscripts, and as resorts for scholastic training. Bede's Latin treatises were copied by hundreds, and were employed as text-books in the monastic schools of Italy and France. Alcuin, who accepted in 782 the invitation of Charlemagne to take charge of the Palace School, established by the great king of all the Franks, was first a studious monk in the school of the monastery at York, and then a noted teacher in that community. He was a pupil of Egbert, Archbishop of York, who had founded an excellent school at the suggestion of Bede himself, and like the venerable scholar of Jarrow entered the monastery in childhood perhaps under similar circumstances. The record of Alcuin's career places him in the period immediately following that of Bede, and the date of that great teacher's death, 735, has even been suggested as the probable date of Alcuin's birth. In the next century another English scholar, of either Welsh or Irish birth, John Scotus Erigena, occupied at the court of Charles the Bald a position similar to the one maintained by Alcuin at the court of Charlemagne.

In the latter part of the ninth century began those formidable incursions of the Danes which continued through several generations, the most grievous affliction ever visited upon the Anglo-Saxon kin. As they pillaged and harried the north country, learning and culture died or fled before them. Whitby and Jarrow, with the other monasteries of the north, were relentlessly destroyed, and the literary supremacy of Northumberland was naturally at an end. Now, for almost the first time, the south kingdom of the Saxons finds a place in the records of our literature, and now the name of Ælfred, or Alfred, "England's Comfort," "England's Darling," as he was lovingly

Alfred, 848-901.

called by those who knew what he wrought, becomes prominently associated with the development of our English speech and the beginnings of our English prose. His courageous defense of his people against an almost irresistible onset, and the difficult achievement of uniting a disordered folk into an actual nation, were perhaps the most conspicuous among his many services to his race; the value of his labors in establishing and in reforming the Church should not be overlooked; but in his wise and vigorous efforts to instruct his people, and to encourage learning throughout the land, Alfred revealed his sagacity as well as his greatness of character.

His Love of Learning.

"I have often recalled," says Alfred in his preface to the translation of Gregory's *Pastoral Care*, "what learned men there were in England formerly, both theologians and teachers of secular learning; and what happy times those were in England . . . and also how eager the clergy were to teach and study and to discharge all their duties; and how foreigners sought out our island for wisdom and instruction's sake; and how now we must betake ourselves elsewhere if we would possess it. So extreme is the case in England now, that there were very few south of the Humber who could understand the ritual in English, or translate a Latin letter; and I believe that there were not many north of the Humber. So few of these were there that I do not think there was a single one south of the Thames (i. e. in Wessex) who could do it when I came to the throne. God be thanked that we now have some beginning of learning among us, and therefore I command that thou use — as I believe thou wilt — thy authority in this as often as thou mayest, and that thou impart the wisdom God hath given thee whenever thou hast opportunity. . . .

Therefore I think it well, if thou thinkest as I do, that we take those books which there is most need all men should know, and turn them into the speech which we all understand, and so bring it about, as we may with God's grace, if we have peace, that all the youth now in England, free men, that have property, may apply themselves uninterruptedly to learning, — so long as they take up no other occupation or employment, — until they are able to read English with ease. . . . Thus I began, among the various and manifold duties of this kingdom, to translate into English the book which is called in Latin *Pastoralis*, or *Shepherd's Book* in English, sometimes word for word, sometimes meaning for meaning, just as I learned of Plegmund, my archbishop, and of Asser, my bishop, and of Grimbold, my masspriest, and of John, my masspriest. After I had studied so that I understood, and could get at the true meaning, I translated this work into English; and to every bishop's see in my kingdom I will send a copy."

Translations from the Latin.

In no half-hearted way did the king execute this self-appointed task. He restored the old system of instruction in the monasteries, turned his own court into a school, of which he was himself the master, invited scholars of renown to settle in his kingdom, and made his capital of Winchester the centre of learning and literary activity in England. Not only his interest in literature, but also his rare good sense, is shown in the selection of the numerous works which he caused to be put into the English tongue. *The Consolations of Philosophy*, an excellent treatise by Boethius, a consul of Rome in the year 510, and one who certainly merits all the honor implied in his title, "last of the Philosophers;" a universal *History* by Orosius, a Spanish scholar and a Chris-

tian of the fifth century; Bede's *Ecclesiastical History*, and Pope Gregory's *Pastoral Care*, are the most important of the translations which Alfred caused to be made. The mark of his own originality is in them all; here he omits a portion of no particular value to his readers, here he adds a passage, sometimes of considerable length, concerning matters of importance with which he is acquainted; the constant purpose to instruct and benefit his people is everywhere evident.

From Alfred's schools went forth many scholars who became teachers noted in their time. Latin continued to be the language used in literary composition, as it remained in large degree the spoken language of the literary class. Near the end of the tenth century, however, Ælfric, Abbot of Ensham, following the example of Alfred, wrote in the native tongue. His most interesting work is a *Latin Grammar* and a *Glossary* which supplies the equivalents of many Anglo-Saxon words. He also wrote a collection of *Homilies* which had wide circulation. Of these there were two series, each containing forty discourses, one series presenting the lives of saints recognized by the Anglo-Saxon Church. A translation of the Pentateuch and the book of *Job* is included in Ælfric's works.

Ælfric, 955?-1020?

The influence of Alfred the Great appears in very practical form in the compilation of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*. Begun under the direction of Alfred, the record of previous events in the history of Britain, from the period of Roman invasion down to his own time, was compiled from the *History* of Bede and the works of other chroniclers. The work was then continued contemporaneously down to the death of Stephen in 1154. It is supposed that local records were kept at the several monasteries in different parts of England, which were sent to some official

The Chronicle.

chronicler who compiled from them a condensed summary of the year's events. These terse annals, trustworthy at least in those portions recorded by contemporary writers, picturesque in spite of their brevity, plain, unadorned, straightforward, constitute the original authority on early English history, and at the same time form our most interesting monument of Anglo-Saxon prose. As we have seen, at rare intervals the historian assumes the gleeman's character, and admits some metrical narrative like those of Brunnanburh and Maldon. For the larger part the *Chronicle* reads like this : —

"871. Now came Alfred, son of Æthelwulf, to the rule of the West Saxons, and in about one month thereafter, Alfred the king fought against the entire Danish army with a little force of English at Wilton, and for a good part of the day routed them ; yet the Danes remained masters of the field. And during this year there were nine battles fought with the enemy in this kingdom south of the Thames; besides which Alfred, the king's brother, and various aldermen and thanes of the king rode on raids, of which no account was kept. And during the year there were slain nine earls and one king ; and in this year the West Saxons made peace with the Danes."

IV. THE NATION AND THE LANGUAGE.

Thus far the record of our literary life has dealt with the productions of a strongly individualized race. Different divisions of the people employed forms that varied in details of pronunciation, in grammatical inflection, and to some extent in vocabulary; but their language was essentially the same. As always happens where a race is divided by sectional lines, there were clearly defined dialects distinguishing

The Nation.

the people of the north, the people of the midland, and those of the south; yet the spirit of a single race spoke in the literature of these different sections; the poetry of Northumbria and the prose of Wessex exhibited the characteristics of a single if not a united folk. The literary supremacy of the Angles early fixed the use of the word *Englisc*, as applied to language and literature, and although, when later that supremacy passed to the Saxons of Wessex along with the political predominance in the kingdom, all that we possess of Northumbrian literature was reproduced in the form of speech peculiar to the West Saxons,[1] the words *English* and *England* were accepted by the southern folk as identifying their nation and their land.

The Language.

The Anglo-Saxon speech had not borrowed much from foreign sources. A few verbal relics of the early Roman occupation have been cited.[2] Not many Cymric or Gaelic terms, apparently, were thus early introduced; those now common in our language were almost all absorbed in later association with the Scotch, the Irish, and the Welsh. Geographical names do frequently preserve the more ancient Celtic form: such are *Avon* and *Esk*, with the variant forms of *Usk*, *Ux*, and *Ox*, all meaning *water*, occurring in place-names like Exeter, Uxbridge, and Oxford; *Avon* and *Esk* appear as the names of rivers in different parts of England. *Pen* (mountain) is also common. The suffix *comb* (hollow, valley) is seen in names like Hascombe and Holcomb. Other Celtic loan-words found in Anglo-Saxon are *down*

[1] This fact should be emphasized. All extant manuscripts, except a few unimportant records, date from the time of Alfred or later; our texts of Cædmon and his followers, of Cynewulf, and later Northumbrian poets, even the single manuscript of *Beowulf*, are all in West Saxon dialect, copies of the originals which disappeared during the Danish wars.

[2] See page 3.

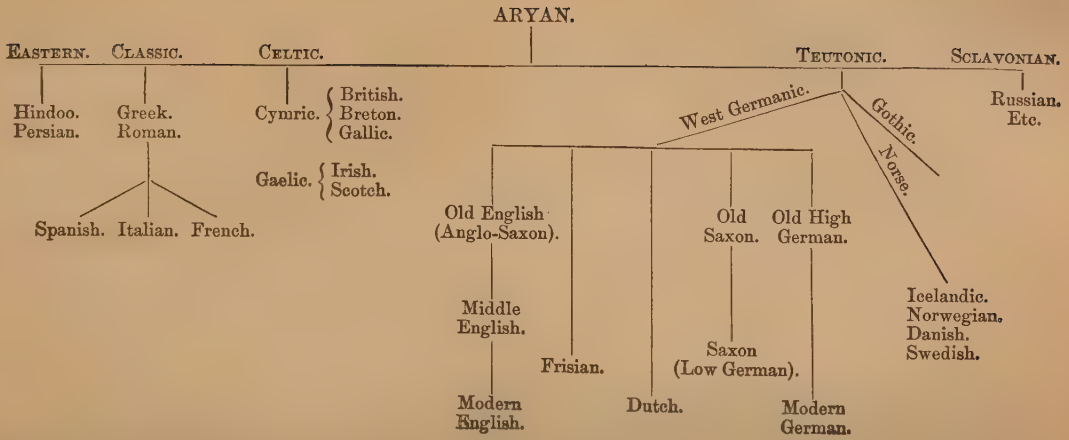
(hill), *dun* (the color), *mattock*, and *slough*. The conversion of the Anglo-Saxons brought a great number of Latin words, some of them Greek originally, into the English. The word *church* (A.-S. *cyrice*, Grk. *kyriakon*), together with the large vocabulary connected with the officers and functions of the Church, was thus added to our language. Such, for example, were the words *biscop* (L. *episcopus*), *munuc* (*monachus*), *preost* (*presbyter*), *deofol* (*diabolus*), *candel* (*candela*), *mynstre*, (*monasterium*), *martyr* (Grk. *martyr*, a witness), and very many others. From the Danes' speech many words found their way into the spoken language; they came more slowly into literary English. The endings *-by*, *-thorp*, *-thwaite*, *-toft*, occurring in many names of places like Whitby, Grimsby, Somersby, Althorp, Brathwaite, and Lowestoft, have the meaning of *village* or *town*. These names are especially numerous in the eastern part of Yorkshire and Lincolnshire, in the region formerly known as the *Danelagh*, where the Danes had their settlements.[1]

From now on the language of England develops a more composite character as a new race, that of the Normans, finds a place for itself in this island kingdom; more rapidly than before the English speech absorbs important elements from another people, and we are brought to a new epoch in the history of English literature, passing into what is often called the Middle English Period.

Book Notes and Study Suggestions.

The history of early England has been admirably told by J. R. Green in his *Making of England*, his *Conquest of England*, and his *Short History of the English People*. Freeman's *Old English History* is an authority, and Sharon Turner's *History of the Anglo-*

[1] The relations of these various peoples to each other and their common descent from the great Aryan stock which peopled the continent of Europe is shown in the following table.


ARYAN.
Eastern.
Classic.
Celtic.
Teutonic.
Sclavonian.
Hindoo.
Persian.
Greek.
Roman.
Cymric.
British.
Breton.
Gallic.
Gaelic.
Irish.
Scotch.
Spanish.
Italian.
French.
West Germanic.
Gothic.
Norse.
Russian.
Etc.
Old English
(Anglo-Saxon).
Old
Saxon.
Old High
German.
Middle
English.
Frisian.
Saxon
(Low German).
Icelandic.
Norwegian.
Danish.
Swedish.
Modern
English.
Dutch.
Modern
German.

Saxons is particularly useful as a study of life and manners.

Ten Brink's *History of English Literature*, vol. i., Stopford Brooke's *Early English Literature*, also his *English Literature from the Beginning to the Norman Conquest*, and the first two volumes of Henry Morley's *English Writers*, are authorities upon Anglo-Saxon literature.

Beginnings of English Literature, by C. M. Lewis (Ginn), includes the period covered here.

Numerous translations of Anglo-Saxon poetry are given by both Brooke and Morley. In the *English Writers*, vol. ii., are *Widsith* and the *Seafarer*, entire; the *Seafarer* and the *Wanderer* are translated by Brooke in the Notes at the end of his volume. *Beowulf* is accessible in several versions, of which that by James M. Garnett (Ginn) is most faithful to the spirit of the original. Professor Garnett has translated also Cynewulf's *Elene* and the fragment of *Judith*, together with *Brunnanburh* and *Maldon*, in one volume (Ginn). The *Christ* is at hand in an excellent prose rendering by Charles H. Whitman (Ginn). Albert S. Cook's edition of *Judith* (Heath) contains a translation of that fragment. The *Battle of Brunnanburh*, too, is found among the poems of Tennyson. There is an excellent volume of *Select Translations from Old English Poetry*, by Cook and Tinker (Ginn).

Bede's account of the poet Cædmon, and Cuthbert's narrative of the death of Bede, also Alfred's preface to his translation of Bede's *Cura Pastoralis*, will be found translated, or paraphrased, by Morley in his *English Writers*, vol. ii. Wulfstan's narrative, incorporated by Alfred in his translation of Orosius, is also given by Morley. Bede's *Ecclesiastical History* and the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* are published in translation by Bohn. A *Life of Alfred the Great*, by Thomas Hughes, is published by Houghton, Mifflin and Company.

Students who wish to begin the study of Anglo-Saxon will find available text-books in Cook's *First Book in Old English* (Ginn), Bright's *Anglo-Saxon Reader* (Holt), Sweet's

Anglo-Saxon Primer, and *Anglo-Saxon Reader* (Clarendon Press). Smith's *Old English Grammar and Exercise Book* (Allyn & Bacon) is an excellent introduction to the study. A series of important texts is included in the *Library of Anglo-Saxon Poetry*, published by Ginn: I. *Beowulf*, by Harrison and Sharp; II. *Exodus and Daniel*, by T. W. Hunt; IV. *Maldon and Brunnanburh*, by C. L. Crow; VI. *Elene*, by C. W. Kent. *The Albion Series* of *Anglo-Saxon and Middle English Poetry* is announced by the same house; Professor A. S. Cook's edition of the *Christ* has already appeared. The *Judith*, also edited by Cook, is published by Heath. Particular attention is directed to the *Millennial Series of English Classics* (Section I. Old English Literature), now in preparation (Heath), Edward Miles Brown, general editor.

The History of the English Language, by O. F. Emerson (Macmillan), and T. R. Lounsbury's *History of the English Language* (Holt) are valuable books. For general study of words, *Words and their Ways in English Speech*, by Greenough and Kittredge (Macmillan), is recommended.

The development of Anglo-Saxon literature may be traced as follows (of course only the most important names and titles are included): —

Historical Events.	Poetry.	Prose.
Period of Roman occupation (A. D. 78–410).	*Widsith*, *Deor's Lament* and *Beowulf* (previous to migration).	
Coming of Hengest and Horsa (449).		
Arrival of Augustine (597).		
	Cædmon (about 664).	
	Cynewulf (about 750).	Bede (673–735).
Ecgberht, King of Wessex (802–39).		
Alfred (871–901).		Alfred (849–901).
Danish kings (1016–42).		Ælfric (955–1020).
Battle of Hastings (1066).		*The Chronicle* (871–1154).

CHAPTER II

THE ANGLO-NORMAN PERIOD

FROM THE BATTLE OF HASTINGS TO THE DEATH OF CHAUCER

I. The New Invasion.
II. The Development of Middle English Literature.
III. The Age of Chaucer.
IV. Geoffrey Chaucer: Poet of the Dawn.

I. THE NEW INVASION.

When, in 1066, William of Normandy led his victorious hosts against Harold and his Saxons at Senlac near Hastings, a new epoch began in English history. The Normans, originally Teutons like the English themselves, were descendants of those Norse pirates, who, under Hrolf, at the beginning of the tenth century, had overrun the land on either side the mouth of the Seine, conquered that territory, and in the course of one hundred and fifty years developed the powerful duchy of Normandy. They were a bold, keen race, vigorous and aggressive, remarkable for their ability in assimilating the desirable qualities of the conquered people, and wonderfully successful in imparting their own energy to their new subjects. They adopted the modes and laws of the feudal system; they accepted the Christian faith; they were foremost in promoting the courtly rules and manners of chivalry; they made themselves at home among the Franks, forgot their own Norse speech, and learned

The Normans.

the French tongue. The music and literature of France impressed them with its softer measures. At the great battle which gave England to William, Taillefer the Norman minstrel led the vanguard, tossing his sword in the air, and chanting loudly the song of Roland, the epic of the Franks. It was really a new race, combining the characteristics of Teuton and Celt, which thus won its footing on English soil — the Norman-French; it represented the best blood and the highest culture of Europe, and its influence in the literature of England, as well as in its life, proved an incalculable benefit in the generations to come. For a hundred years after the conquest of the island was actually completed, the lines between the conquerors and the conquered were rather sharply drawn. There were two races, Norman and English; two languages side by side. Yet the natural tendency was toward assimilation, and in the end the result was the same as it had been in France: the native tongue triumphed over that of the invader. The Norman-French became Anglo-Norman, and finally English. In 1350 the English language was used in the schools, and in 1362, by royal decree, Edward III. made it the official language for courts of law. But the English of that period had been wonderfully expanded and enriched by the elements it had absorbed from the Norman-French; its vocabulary settled by the usage of Wyclif and Chaucer, its inflections gradually modified if not absolutely lost, it thus became the basis of our modern speech. With reference to this epoch in the history of our language it is customary to designate as the Middle English Period the three centuries which intervened between the Conquest and the death of Chaucer, although throughout the twelfth century the literature produced was almost entirely in Latin or in Norman-French.

While in England the literary spirit had languished since the death of Alfred, it had flourished with remarkable energy among the peoples of western Europe. In the romance dialects of northern and southern France, indeed, a new literature had been created, a literature inspired by the institution of chivalry, and devoted to the glory of knighthood and the praise of love. The French *trouvères* were just beginning to compose their *Chansons de Gestes*, or *Songs of Deeds*, in which were celebrated the achievements of national heroes like Charlemagne and Roland. Love songs and tales of adventure were finding their place in literature. That scholarship which had made the schools and abbeys of England famous in the days of Bede and Alcuin, and had been ruthlessly blotted out in the harrying of the Danes, had blossomed again in France, where Alcuin himself had sowed the seed of learning at the court of Charlemagne. At the time of the Norman invasion French monks were the leaders in all scholastic and ecclesiastical learning; for a generation before that event English students had been flocking to France as the centre of European culture, and young English priests betook themselves to the great monastic school at Bec, to learn wisdom at the feet of Lanfranc and Anselm.

Literature among the Normans.

II. THE DEVELOPMENT OF MIDDLE ENGLISH LITERATURE.

The latter part of King William's life was occupied in completing the conquest which gave him his title in history. Here and there over the land arose the massive, square Norman castles of the barons. The monasteries were ruled by Norman monks. Lanfranc was made Archbishop of Canterbury, and at his death was succeeded by Anselm.

An Epoch of Romance.

The literary works of ecclesiastics were in the Latin tongue, but the literature of France held its place at court and in the great halls of the barons. The English gleeman now gave place to the Norman minstrel, and tales of French heroes, sung in the foreign tongue, were heard in the banqueting halls of the nobles. Strange stories of Charlemagne and his twelve paladins, abounding in the reports of jousts and battles, of tricks and cunning; the adventures of Grecian Alexander, too; tales of the Trojan War; and numerous other themes, many of them borrowed from the East, formed the subjects of *trouvère* and *jongleur*, and kept their places through long years to come. Very nearly related to English scenes, and yet an importation from the poetry of France, were the traditionary romances of King Arthur and his Knights of the Table Round. The most important and indeed the immediate effect of this Norman-French influence upon our own English literature was seen in the revival during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries of an interest in the deeds of English heroes and the traditions native to English soil. This interest speedily manifested itself in the similar treatment of English themes by Norman poets in Norman-French, and a little later, a treatment of these themes in English speech; for by that time the English spirit and the English language had proved stronger than the Norman, and had prevailed. The deeds of Hereward the Saxon had been told in Latin, and then in Norman verse; English minstrels now entertained the court. Similarly also, the adventures of Guy of Warwick and Bevis of Hampton, local heroes of tradition, were sung by Anglo-Norman poets, and then in the English tongue. An important element of Norman-French poetry is found in the treatment of these English themes. This is the element of love. The old Saxons

in their rude way had sung of battle and of beauty; but while tales of adventure and daring had been told, never a word had been uttered of the tenderer passion of love; there had been no recognition of woman's subtle power in the hearts and lives of men, until the Norman poets had introduced their forms of courtly gallantry, had sung the devotion of knight to lady, and had spoken of the rewards of love. Among the earliest of our English poems to reflect this influence of the French are the three metrical romances of *Sir Tristram*, *Havelok the Dane*, and *King Horn*, which apparently belong to the latter part of the thirteenth century.

"Alle beon hi blithe
That to mi song lithe!
A song ihc schal you singe
Of Murry the kinge,"

is the quaint beginning of this last-named poem. Murry is king of South Daneland; his queen is Godhild; they have an only son, whose name is Horn. One day the sea-robbers — Saracens, the poem calls them — descend upon King Murry's shores, the king is slain, his queen driven into hiding, and Horn, his son, with twelve comrades is taken prisoner. But the rare beauty of the youths excites the pity of the pagan leader, and instead of putting them to the sword, their captors place the boys in a boat and set them adrift on the open sea. Miraculously the waves drive the ship to Westernesse, where King Ailmar adopts Horn and provides for his education. Horn grows in favor with all men, but most of all he is loved by the king's daughter, Maiden Rymenhild. Now the early comrades of the young prince are still in his company, and two of them are especially connected with the fate and fortunes of Childe Horn: one is Athulf, his trusty

King Horn.

friend; the other Fikenhild, who is a traitor. By the treachery of this latter, Ailmar is deceived, and Horn is banished from the land. New adventures, new wanderings follow; at last Horn arrives in Ireland, and becomes King Thurston's man. For seven years he remains in Ireland a banished man, but always faithful to his love. Meanwhile King Modi of Reynes sues for the hand of Maiden Rymenhild; Ailmar assents, and the wedding-day is set. Rymenhild and Athulf send a messenger to search for Horn and to warn him to return. Horn is found in time, arrives in Westernesse on the day of the marriage, attends the feast disguised as a pilgrim, and in dramatic fashion expels the intruder, and claims his own. But the course of true love does not yet run smoothly. Horn departs again, now to claim his rights in his home in Daneland. This he succeeds in doing, and discovers his mother, Queen Godhild, still alive. Again word comes from the bride in haste; Rymenhild is once more in mortal peril, — this time at the hands of the traitor Fikenhild. Again Horn returns, rescues his betrothed, and all ends joyously with the wedding and a happy return to South Daneland, where Horn is king.

The love story has now become an element in English literature. It is the very kernel in the romance of *King Horn*, although oddly, as it seems to us, the heroine woos the hero, and Horn is far too passive a lover to suit the Rymenhilds of a later day.

Folk Romance.

Along with these metrical romances, there were circulating in popular form during the twelfth, thirteenth, and fourteenth centuries numerous shorter works in both verse and prose. Collections of short stories, like the *Gesta Romanorum* and the *Process of the Seven Sages*, were translated into English. Short metrical tales were numerous, the best

gradually appearing in the early ballads, and reappearing again and again in versions slightly different, the almost mysterious creations of the nameless poets of the people. Truly, they who told the tales and sang the *gestes* of Robin Hood will never fail of recognition, even though their names are lost in the dimness of obscurity. By far the most noteworthy of these early romances, however, are those which embalm the traditions and legends of King Arthur. The knightly exploits of Arthur's followers, the stories of courtly love and of lawless passion, mystical tales of adventure in search of the Holy Grail, — these themes won all the greater interest and attention because they centred around a national hero who had found a home in Wales. Chretien de Troyes and German Wolfram had likewise sung the Grail saga, but English story-tellers claimed, and have since claimed, blameless King Arthur as their own.

The Chronicles.

Nearly akin to these metrical romances and epic narratives were the rhyming chronicles of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. As we have seen, the great prose *Chronicle* commenced in Alfred's time was continued by monkish annalists down to the death of Stephen in 1154; but the compositions of these later chroniclers were of an entirely different sort, and present a curious mingling of historical record and romantic tradition. The story of their evolution is similar to that of the romances already described, and they developed coincidently with the latter. The most important of these works is Layamon's *Brut*, a long narrative poem of 32,000 lines, in the old alliterative metre of Anglo-Saxon poetry, spirited and rugged, reminding one not a little of Cædmon's vigorous verse. Layamon was an English priest living in Worcestershire. "He dwelt at Earnley," he tells us,

"a noble church on the bank of Severn, near Radstone, where he read books. It came in mind to him and in his chiefest thought that he would tell the noble deeds of England, what the men were named, and whence they came, who first had English land after the flood." Layamon's poem was written near the beginning of the thirteenth century; but it was not altogether an original work. Among the books which this English priest had read at Earnley were the histories of Bede and Albinus, and one which was itself entitled *Brut*, composed in French verse by Wace, a Norman *trouvère;* this poem Layamon translated, incorporating it in his larger work. Wace in turn had appropriated his material from still earlier tales which had been circulating in France; but the original work to which both Layamon and Wace were most indebted was a so-called *Historia Regum Britanniæ*, or *History of the Kings of Britain*, which was written in Latin prose by Geoffrey of Monmouth in 1147. In this work Geoffrey assumes to give the history of Britain from the time when Brutus, the great-grandson of Aeneas, landed on its shores and gave his name to the island kingdom which he founded. Geoffrey was a Welsh priest at the court of Henry I., and died Bishop of St. Asaph in 1154. The remarkable imagination of this author provoked the ire of other chroniclers, who declared that he had "lied saucily and shamelessly;" but along with its fictions the "history" preserved many ancient Welsh traditions, which Geoffrey may have believed. At all events, he gave to the world a wonderful story book, from which have passed into literature such characters as Locrine and Gorbuduc, King Arthur, Cymbeline, and Lear. Thus, then, do we trace the fortunes of this work: Geoffrey completed his *History* in Latin in 1147, Wace produced his French

version of the *Brut* in 1155, and in 1205, or thereabout, Layamon incorporated the work of his predecessor in his own great English poem. The significance of its title is now obvious; it is the epic of Brutus and his successors in the land. Layamon's work is of considerable importance. Here is a true English poet drawing his material from Norman and Celt, celebrating the deeds not of Englishmen, but of Britons, appropriating their glory for the glory of England, and tacitly accepting conditions as they are. The poem is purely English; few French words are found in its 32,000 lines. It is the best product of English poetry since Cynewulf's time, and properly represents the transition period between the old and the new.

About 1300 Robert of Gloucester wrote a rhymed *Chronicle*, based on the works of his predecessors, and covering the field of English history from the time of Brutus down to the reign of Edward I. And a few years later Robert Manning of Brunne wrote such another chronicle, based on translations of Wace and a metrical history recently composed by Peter Langtoft, a French monk.

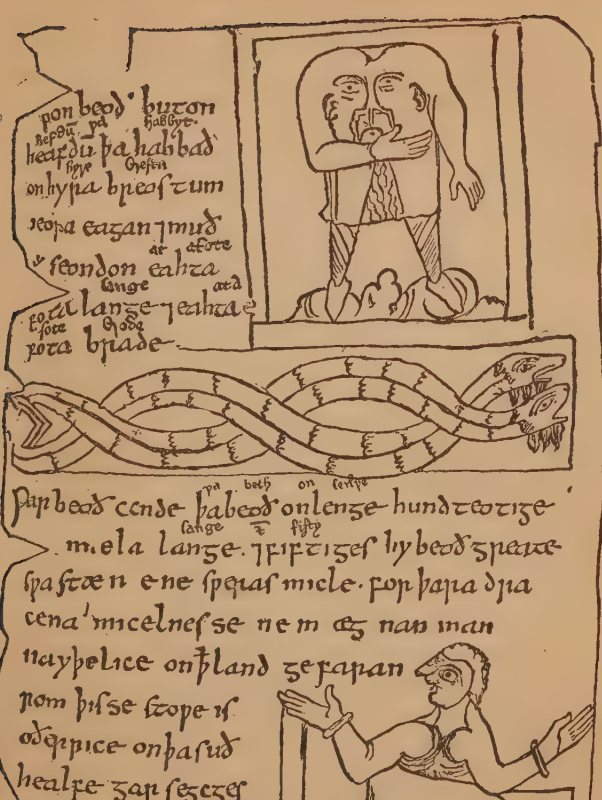
Along with the works of the romantic chroniclers of the fourteenth century may very well be placed the curious volume of travels ascribed to the authorship of Sir John Mandeville. The reputed author of the book declares that he set out on his travels on Michælmas Day, 1322. He claims to have been more than thirty years abroad, and describes the lands, their peoples and customs with all the realism of an eye-witness. He tells us that he first wrote his account in Latin, that he then turned it into French, and then again, in 1356, into English. These statements have in time been disproved. The work may indeed have been a collection of traveler's

Sir John Mandeville's Voyages and Travels.

tales, thus brought together and unified by the author, who seems to have been as credulous or fully as imaginative a writer as Geoffrey of Monmouth. At all events, "Sir John" produced the most entertaining of narratives. Fascinating indeed these travels must have been to the readers of the time, for of no book, with the exception of the Scriptures, can more manuscripts be found dating from the fourteenth and the beginning of the fifteenth centuries. According to Mandeville's account, Jerusalem is in the exact middle of the earth, "as may be proved and shown there by a spear which is fixed in the earth at the hour of midday, when it is equinoctial, which gives no shadow on any side." In Egypt he hears of that bird called the Phœnix, of which there is but one in the world.

"It comes to burn itself on the altar of the temple at the end of five hundred years, for so long it lives; and then the priests array their altar, and put thereon spices, and sulphur, and other things that will burn quickly, and the Phœnix comes and burns itself to ashes. The next day they find in the ashes a worm; and the second day after they find a bird, alive and perfect; and the third day it flies away. This bird is often seen flying in those countries. It is somewhat larger than an eagle, and has a crest of feathers on its head greater than that of a peacock; its neck is yellow, its beak blue, and its wings of a purple color, and the tail is yellow and red."

Most marvelous of all are the adventures of our traveler in the realm of Prester John, the great emperor of India. Here are giants twenty-eight or thirty feet in length who eat men's flesh; evil women who have precious stones in their eyes with which they slay men by a look. In the kingdom of Cathay he discovers a people who have but one eye, which is in the middle of the forehead; another who have no heads, but



FACSIMILE TAKEN FROM AN ELEVENTH-CENTURY MANUSCRIPT CONTAINING AN ACCOUNT OF THE WONDERS OF THE EAST

(This work is found largely incorporated in the so-called *Travels of Sir John Mandeville*, and these illustrations are thus recognized as the inspiration of some of the marvels described. The manuscript is in the British Museum.)

their eyes are in their shoulders. In one island are people who have the face all flat, without nose and without mouth; in another the inhabitants "have the lip above the mouth so great that when they sleep in the sun they cover all the face with their lip." But the wonders of Mandeville's narrative are too numerous to be recorded here.[1]

The earliest known manuscript of this work is in French, and dated 1371. It was not translated into English until the beginning of the next century, and that translation is so defective as to preclude the possibility of any connection with the original author. The *Travels* is really a compilation of various works in several languages, which supplied a mass of travelers' lore, and served as the only source of knowledge concerning the far-off, mysterious realms of the East. Whether or not there ever was a Sir John Mandeville we do not know; but the book which stands to the credit of this name is one of the most readable and most important prose works of its time.

Moralizing Literature.

A distinct class of literature in the natural English tongue is that illustrated by the *Poema Morale*, or *Moral Ode*, a rhyming poem, found in a collection of homilies which date from the year 1160.[2] The *Ode* is itself a homily in which

[1] *The Voyages and Travels of Sir John Mandeville* is to be had, edited by Henry Morley, in *Cassell's National Library*, for ten cents.

[2] The beginning of the poem is as follows: —

"Ich æm elder than ich wes a wintre and alore;
Ic wælde more thanne ic dude; mi wit ah to ben more!
Wel lange ic habbe child ibeon a weorde end ech adede;
Theh ic beo awintre eald, to yyng i eom a rede."

It may be rendered thus: —

"I am older than I was, in winters and in lore;
I wield more power than I did; my wit ought to be more!
Too long I have been but a child in word and eke in doing;
Yet though I am in winters old, too young I am in choosing."

the unknown sermonizer admonishes his reader to lay up treasures in heaven. Its quaint verses, with their pronounced accentuation and regularly recurring end-rhymes, an innovation borrowed from French poetry, seem to have been very popular, as numerous copies of the poem are extant. The thirteenth and fourteenth centuries produced many examples of this moralizing literature. The so-called *Sayings of Alfred* were compiled apparently about 1200. Orm, or Ormin, wrote the religious poem which he called the *Ormulum* in the first quarter of the thirteenth century. Like the *Moral Ode*, Orm's poem pleads for the religious life, and in plain, blunt English terms applies the lessons of the daily service of the Church. It was a work of prodigious length, for the 10,000 lines which have come down to us represent but a tenth part of the entire poem. Orm was of Danish descent, and lived in that part of England which had been occupied by the Danes. His language was the dialect of the Midland, and shows no trace of Norman influence. Unlike the author of the *Ode*, Orm does not use end-rhyme. A curious feature of his work is the fact that he marked the quantity of the vowels by doubling the consonants after short vowels, a feature of considerable value to the linguist. The first line of his preface is thus written: —

"Thiss boc is nemmned Ormulum forrthi thatt Orm itt wrohhte."

"This book is named Ormulum because Orm wrought it."

The Ancren Riwle, or *Rule of the Anchoresses*, which belongs to the same period with the *Ormulum*, is a prose work compiled by some unknown writer for the guidance of three young women in Dorsetshire, who had retired from the world and entered on the life of the cloister. It is in the southern dialect, and is inter-

esting not alone for its devout naturalness and genuine Christian spirit, but also for its mingling of English with Norman words; it is a good example of the transition period in southern England. The later *Genesis and Exodus* is a religious poem belonging in the middle of this same century.

This religious literature continued to flourish throughout the fourteenth century. The titles of some of the more important works will in themselves be sufficiently significant. Many of these works have their genesis in the ecclesiastical literature of the Normans. Thus in 1303 Robert Manning of Brunne translated a French poem under the title of *Handlyng Synne;* and in 1340 a prose work appeared with the singular title *Ayenbite of Inwyt*, which would have more meaning for us if we were to retranslate it by words of French rather than of Saxon origin; the *Ayenbite of Inwyt* is but the *Remorse of Conscience* literally expressed in the native tongue. This work was in prose, but about the same year Richard Rolle of Hampole wrote in Latin, and in Northumbrian English for the unlearned, a poem called the *Pricke of Conscience.* Of some importance also is the *Cursor Mundi*, a metrical version of the Old and New Testament, which dates from about 1320.

The Religious Revivals of the Fourteenth Century.

As we reach the latter part of the fourteenth century, we find ourselves practically at the end of what might be called the transition period, which naturally follows the mingling of the Normans and the English. Beside the great name of Chaucer three names of prominence meet our eye: those of Langland, Wyclif, and Gower. The first two are inseparably connected with the literature of religion, although their work is distinct from that of the ecclesiastics who had preceded them. It is

necessary to remember that at the beginning of the thirteenth century the life of the English Church had received an extraordinary impulse through the appearance of the mendicant friars who entered in the train of the Normans. They were for the most part men of devoted life, educated in French schools, and exerting an influence that was generally wholesome and helpful. But as time passed on and the religious orders acquired wealth, their religious life degenerated, until by the middle of the fourteenth century they had grown hypocritical as well as proud. Their influence became pernicious and a source of evil in society. In this same period the condition of the common people had been rendered intolerable by the results of war and by the visitations of plague. In 1349 the Black Death had swept through the kingdom. Entire districts had been depopulated. In their wretchedness and their discontent, it was natural that sober-minded men of the common class should turn to religion for relief. Then it was that that singular character, William Langland, with his tall, gaunt figure, with his contempt for pride and wealth, appeared in London.

Piers the Plowman.

In 1362 Langland first wrote his *Vision of Piers the Plowman*. This was an allegory or dream, which the poet declares came to him while asleep one May morning by the side of a brook among the Malvern Hills. In his vision Piers finds "a fair field full of folk" of all manner of men, poor and rich together. Some are sweating at the plough, others wasting inordinately their substance in gluttony and lust. He beholds the Tower of Truth, and also the Dungeon of Falsehood; typical characters drawn from the life with which he was familiar, representing various classes whose shortcomings he wished to rebuke, are introduced by Langland with a vigorous

force that gives impressiveness to his work. While the spirit and tone of the *Vision* are serious and severe, the extraordinary vividness of his portraits, his keen insight into the ways of men, the zeal and passion of the poet, give to Langland's work a real distinction in the literature of the time. The poem itself is extremely interesting in its metrical structure. It is in the Midland dialect and stands forth as the last example of the old alliterative verse in English poetry. There are no end-rhymes. The diction is like that of Chaucer.[1] Langland was a reformer, and he devoted the last years of his life to the amplification of his *Vision*. In 1393 he added the poems *Do Wel*, *Do Bet*, and *Do Best*. Long Will, as his contemporaries called him, died at Bristol probably in the year 1400.

John Wyclif, 1324-84.

While Langland's *Vision* was stirring the hearts and consciences of the common people of England, there was already in preparation a work destined to surpass all other books of its time in its influence for good and its effect upon the development of our literary English. This was Wyclif's great translation of the Bible. While the dreamer of the *Vision of Piers the Plowman* was but a humble unordained servant of the Church, John Wyclif was a prominent figure in ecclesiastical and scholastic circles. A graduate of Oxford, he received the degree of Doctor of Divinity, and became Master of Balliol College in that University. Aroused and indignant at the open corruption of those who assumed

[1] Langland's method of versification may be seen from the following lines which form the beginning of his poem : —

"In a somer seson whan soft was the sonne
I shope[1] me in shroudes[2] as I a shepe[3] were,
In habit as an heremite unholy of werkes
Went wyde in this world wondres to here."

[1] Clad. [2] Garments. [3] Shepherd.

to represent the Church, Wyclif's soul was set on fire with the ardor, and some of the fanaticism, of the reformer; even before his degree had been conferred, he had in his *Objections to Friars* sounded a note which was but the prelude to his vigorous, fearless career. In 1375 he was sent with the authority of Government to Bruges to protest against the encroachments of papal power; but three years later, having disputed the doctrine of transubstantiation and other teachings of the Church, he was summoned before an ecclesiastical court in London to answer charges of heresy. Then came other attacks; still Wyclif continued to preach and to write against the evil deeds of the friars, and also against certain dogmas of Rome. The seed of his sowing speedily bore fruit. Disciples and adherents of the reformer repeated his words and extended his influence. In 1374 he had been presented to the living of Lutterworth in Leicestershire, and at Lutterworth he preached and wrote, although he continued as lecturer at the University till silenced in 1381. Enemies attempted to suppress him; the pope issued bulls demanding his arrest. Only his popularity with the masses, and the firm friendship of a few powerful nobles, saved Wyclif from imprisonment, if not from death. In 1384 he was summoned by Pope Urban to answer to charges at Rome; but in that same year the defiant reformer was stricken with paralysis while celebrating mass in his Lutterworth church, and two days later died. Forty years after his death the spirit of fanatical hate found expression in an act of impotent vengeance upon Wyclif's remains: the coffin was broken open, his bones were burned, and the ashes cast into the waters of the Swift, whence, as Thomas Fuller said in his *Church History*, "the brook conveyed them to the Avon, Avon into Severn,

Severn into the narrow seas, they into the main ocean; and thus the ashes of Wyclif are the emblem of his doctrine, which now has dispersed all the world over."

Distinguished as a pioneer in the English Reformation, Wyclif holds his place in literature because he made the first translation of the entire Bible into English. The whole of the New Testament and a considerable portion of the Old Testament he himself translated from the Latin Vulgate; the remainder of the work was done under his direction. It was a book which had as much influence in fixing the form of our language as did the work of Chaucer. The plain yet impressive diction of this translator may be recognized in the following passage: —

"But in o day of the woke ful eerli thei camen to the grave, and broughten swete smelling spices that thei hadden araved. And thei founden the stoon turnyd awey fro the graue. And thei geden in and foundun not the bodi of the Lord Jhesus. And it was don, the while thei weren astonyed in thought of this thing, lo twe men stodun bisidis hem in schynyng cloth. And whanne thei dredden and bowiden her semblaunt into erthe, thei seiden to hem, what seeken ye him that lyueth with deede men? He is not here: but he is risun: haue ye minde how he spak to you whanne he was yit in Golilee, and seide, for it behoueth mannes sone to be bitakun into the hondis of synful men: and to be crucifyed: and the thridde day to rise agen?"

John Gower, 1325-1408.

Little is known of the personality of the man who was Chaucer's principal literary contemporary, and whom he mentions as the "moral Gower." This writer was apparently a native of Kent; he was a man of wealth, and while a secular poet like Chaucer, he must have been a serious student of the times and impressed with the grave conditions then existing in society and politics. He is remem-

bered as the author of three important works. The *Speculum Meditantis*, or the *Mirror of One Meditating*, was written in French. His second work, the *Vox Clamantis*, or the *Voice of One Crying*, is a Latin poem in hexameter and pentameter verse; it was composed just after the rebellion under Wat Tyler and Jack Straw in 1381, and pictures the condition of society and moralizes on its ills. Gower's third production is the *Confessio Amantis*, or the *Lover's Confession;* this is in English, and is a poetical collection of tales bound together by a story-thread in the style of Boccaccio's *Decameron* and of Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*. It seems to have been written about 1385. Although a studious and industrious writer, John Gower was not a model story-teller; his tales are too dull to hold the interest of present-day readers, and by the side of Chaucer he occupies an inferior place.

III. THE AGE OF CHAUCER.

The beginnings of English literature as we have traced them seem to belong to the shadow-land of a dim past. The makers of that early literature are often nameless, and the personality of many whose names are known is vaguely indistinct. It is as though we saw men only through the mists of a gray, chill twilight before the dawn. In the latter half of the fourteenth century, however, there comes a burst of sunlight that brightens and warms every reader's heart. Men move in a visible and a familiar world; they speak in hearty English tones. We know them for our kinsfolk, although the modulations and the accent strike somewhat strangely on our ears. There is the song of lark and throstle. The breath of an English May is in the atmosphere. It is the age of Geoffrey Chaucer, —

. . . "Poet of the dawn, who wrote
The Canterbury Tales, and his old age
Made beautiful with song; and as I read
I hear the crowing cock, I hear the note
Of lark and linnet, and from every page
Rise odors of plowed field or flowery mead." [1]

Chaucer's England.

The England of Chaucer's day was the England of Edward III., of Richard II., and of Henry IV. The great Duke of Lancaster, John of Gaunt, was himself the poet's patron and protector. It was a confused but eventful epoch in English history, a period of foreign war and civil strife. When Geoffrey Chaucer was a boy of five or six, the English won the historic victory of Crécy; ten years later he was old enough to shout with the rest over the news of Poictiers, and to join in the tumult of triumph when the Black Prince led his pikesmen and his archers through the crowded London streets, with the king of France, a royal prisoner, riding at his side. At nineteen Chaucer was himself a soldier, fighting on French soil in maintenance of Edward's claim to France. The commotions which attended the rise of the Lancastrians affected directly the fortunes of the poet, and the accession of John of Gaunt's son to the throne occurred a twelvemonth before Chaucer's death.

Society.

In appearance England was still medieval. The age of chivalry was in its very flower. The knight, attended by esquire and yeomen, rode abroad, engaged in crusade or on private quarrel, fought the pagans of the Orient, or contended in the lists with knights of other nations for the glory of his own. Rural England was gradually developing. Manor houses, with all the barns and buildings of a fertile, prosperous countryside, are more typical of this age than the heavy threatening towers and ramparts of

[1] Longfellow's sonnet, *Chaucer*.

the northern castles, now gray with time. In these more peaceful abodes of the well-to-do franklins, or free landholders, — the gentry of a later day, — was dispensed a hospitality as abundant as it was rude. Along the highways moved a picturesque procession, typical of English life: chapmen or peddlers, dickering with perhaps a ploughman, or with some village girl or gossip more curious for news than wares; merchants riding busily, somewhat wrapped in thoughts of trade; soldiers, farm hands, mendicant friars, officers of the law, minstrels, pilgrims, — wayfarers of varying rank and class. And men in buckram suits, or Kendal green, harbored in the tracts of forest wilderness, or slunk behind the thickets at the roadside; it was safer to travel in company than alone.

Luxury and Extravagance.

In the world of trade the merchant-companies, or guilds, such as the merchant-tailors, the fishmongers, or the goldsmiths' companies, enjoyed a prestige and privilege which made them a political as well as a commercial power. Under Edward III. they received the right to elect members to Parliament. Wealthy merchants lent large sums of money to the king. English travelers, not only those engaged in trade, or dispatched on official errands, but sightseers, pilgrims, pleasure seekers, were found in every country of Europe; they observed closely and intelligently, and became conversant with the customs and literatures of foreign lands. Often they imitated or imported the luxuries enjoyed abroad. Edward III. played chess on a board of jasper and crystal silver-mounted. He gave his daughter Margaret a wedding present of 2000 pearls, and to his mistress, Alice Perrers, 20,000 large pearls in a single gift.

Fine gothic structures rise; splendid tapestries adorn

the walls of the rich; beautiful windows of stained glass admit the light. The newer houses of the wealthy now have chimneys. Singular dishes are concocted for the luxurious taste of the time. Hens and rabbits are prepared chopped together with almonds, raisins, sugar, ginger, herbs, onions, rice-flour — the whole colored with saffron. Peacocks are roasted and served in their own plumage. Along with this extravagance of table there are incongruities in etiquette, and an absence of many simple conveniences, indispensable to-day, that impress us, perhaps unduly, with the uncouth crudities of the age. Forks are not yet invented; one holds his meat with his left hand and carves with his right. We find one particular cook commended because he does not scratch his head or wipe his plates with his tongue. There is an extreme frankness in habits and in speech on the part of both women and men. What to us appears grossly out of place to both eye and ear is in many cases tolerated without a thought. On the whole the position of woman is not altogether enviable.

Evils of the Time.

Moreover, there were many contrasts and some strong shadows in English life during Edward's brilliant and extravagant reign. The Church had fallen on evil times; its corruption was notorious even among the people themselves. Already, in the protests of Langland and the threatenings of Wyclif, the spirit of the Reformation had begun to speak, but the fullness of time had not yet come. The great abbeys supported a luxury no less extravagant than that of the castle. The sensual, ease-loving monks, the shrewd and conscienceless priests, the pardoners with their gross impostures, the friars pertinaciously begging their vagabond way over England — these classes furnished types which were deemed fairly representative of the time, and which appealed to others than Chaucer as the bane

of rich and poor alike. Happily, now and then was found some poor parish priest, benignant, humble, devoted to his flock, versed in the spirit as in the letter of the Word, forgetful of his own needs in errands of mercy, himself a safe example to the sheep, following faithfully the precepts that he taught, a veritable shepherd and no hireling.

Among the common people were many troublous signs. There was a great gulf between rich and poor, who had little in common except the air they breathed. But that air was English air, and when the abuse of power became too gross, or the callous indifference of the one class to the woes of the other intolerable, there were outbreaks and revolts. Wat the Tyler was a day laborer, yet the rebellion he headed in 1381 threw the entire south of England into the turmoil of war. The commons were beginning to feel their strength and to clamor for rights.

London was a populous and busy city — then, as now, the heart of England's life. Upon the broad surface of the Thames floated ships from the Mediterranean and the Baltic, some of them laden with the silks and spices of the East. Wharves and warehouses are piled with English products, wool, skins, cloth, metals, butter, and cheese, — consignments to Germany and Russia, to France and Spain. Shipmen and customs officers, merchants and exchangers, tradesmen, carters, travelers, men with foreign faces, mingle in confused activity. The river is the main thoroughfare as well for rowboats and barges, which convey business men and pleasure parties from point to point. Near one extreme of the town is Westminster; near the eastern limit rises the historic Tower. St. Paul's, a gothic structure, stands between the two, not far from the riverside and near the approach to Lon-

London.

don bridge, which, all overhung with shops and houses, affords communication with the Surrey side of the Thames. A continuous throng of citizens and strangers pass and repass on this famous bridge. Southwark is on the southern bank, where are most of the places of amusement and resort. Here stood the noted Tabard Inn, "faste by the belle." Beyond the suburb lay green fields and open meadowland, over which wound the country highways through Surrey and Kent. Yonder the road to Canterbury might be traced. On the side of London away from the Thames, the city was protected by its medieval wall, pierced here and there by gates, through which visitors entered and left the town. Above these gates were heavy bastions, and in one of these somewhat sombre towers Geoffrey Chaucer was lodged for about twelve years. The streets of London were narrow and dirty beyond belief. The centre of the roadway was a running sewer; pigs wallowed in the mire, notwithstanding an earlier law which read, "And whoso will keep a pig, let him keep it in his own house." Such, in part, was the capital city of England in the fourteenth century, and such, allowing for increased population, it remained for a hundred years.

IV. GEOFFREY CHAUCER: 1340(?)–1400.

Geoffrey Chaucer was born in London about 1340.

Youth. His father, John Chaucer, was a wine merchant in Thames Street. He had been purveyor to the household of Edward III., and was evidently in excellent standing as a citizen, obtaining for his son a position much coveted for a youth in that age, — an appointment as page in the royal household. It is in this connection that we first hear of Geoffrey Chaucer, a youth of seventeen, attached to the family

of Prince Lionel, Duke of Clarence, in the immediate service of Elizabeth his wife. Here the boy received his first glimpse of the life at court, his first lessons in courtly fashions and behavior. He waited on his mistress, did her errands, assisted in the table service, was taught music and the languages, associated with youths of a station more exalted than his own, and grew familiar with the habits and behavior of men of rank and note. In the fall of 1359 Edward invaded France, and Geoffrey Chaucer had some part in that campaign, falling as a prisoner into the hands of the French. In the following March he was ransomed, the king contributing sixteen pounds to the necessary sum. From this time on Chaucer appears to have been attached to the court, and is referred to in the records of 1367 as valet to the king, with a salary of twenty pounds. He was already married to Philippa, lady-in-waiting to the queen. It must not be supposed that during these years, from seventeen to twenty-seven or thirty, the scholar's tastes and instincts had been stinted. That he was ever a student of books and a lover of nature is clear enough from the literary material of which Chaucer was master; and this was the budding time of his genius.

Early Works.

Chaucer had already found the power to express himself in rhyme, although, as we should expect, it is in the conventional form of the only literature with which the young poet was then acquainted, the French. Three poems are extant which belong apparently to this first period: *Chaucer's A. B. C.*, a prayer to the Virgin Mary, freely translated from the French of a Cistercian monk, and taking its title from the fact that its twenty-three stanzas begin consecutively with the various letters of the alphabet in order; *The Compleynte to Pite*, a love poem.

melodious and graceful, though in the conventional manner of French love poems of the day; and *The Dethe of Blaunche the Duchesse*, a poem of 1334 lines, in honor of Blanche, wife of John of Gaunt. As this lady died in 1369, this elegy is assigned to that same year. Besides these poems, Chaucer composed also many songs and ballads, with which, according to John Gower, "the land ful filled was, over all." It is also true that Chaucer had made a translation of the most popular French poem of that age, a long allegory of love entitled *Le Roman de la Rose*. The English version of this work, known as *The Romaunt of the Rose*, although attributed to Chaucer for many years, is not regarded as his.

The Second Period.

Between the years 1370 and 1385 the poet's life was rather that of a man of action than that of a man of letters, and yet coincidently with the discharge of important public duties, Chaucer was introduced to a new world of art and culture, under the inspiration of which he accomplished his finest work. In December, 1372, he was sent by the king to the cities of Genoa and Florence on an important mission pertaining to commercial relations between those cities and London. He was absent on this errand about three months, returning to England in April, 1373. Precisely what Chaucer did in Italy at this time is all unknown to us, but we may well imagine the delight with which he looked on the beautiful works about him. Pisa was already famous for its marvelous tower of creamy marble, while in Florence, Giotto had completed the slender campanile now called by his name.

Just where Chaucer walked or rode, with whom he conversed, and whom he went to see, we know not; but Francis Petrarch, the laureate of Italy, was still

alive, and could be visited in his country retreat near Padua. Boccaccio was already famous as the author of romances and tales which were to gather new fame in the hands of this English poet. In the fall of that very year, 1373, Boccaccio was to commence in Florence a series of public lectures on the *Divine Comedy* of Dante, the great world-poet of medievalism, who had died some fifty years before.

Thus did Chaucer enter Italy, that country which was foremost in the great awakening of thought and life, which we call the Renascence, or new birth of culture, the real beginning of the modern world. The impressions of this visit, undoubtedly profound, were intensified by a second journey in 1378, when Chaucer was intrusted by young King Richard with a mission to Milan, occupying some three months, as before. Chaucer was now an extremely busy man, with small leisure for literary work. In 1374 he was appointed comptroller of the customs and subsidies on wools, skins, and tanned hides, in the port of London, it being explicitly stated that the duties of this office should be performed by the comptroller in person, and not by deputy. The death of Edward, and the accession of the boy-king, Richard II., occurred in June, 1377. In 1382 Chaucer received a new appointment to the office of comptroller of the petty customs, which he held in addition to his first collectorship. In 1385 he was granted permission to employ a deputy, an arrangement which afforded much relief.

Italian Influences.

In spite of the laborious days, these years of the poet's life were by no means unproductive or unimportant. Very early in this period, perhaps, belongs a prose version of the famous medieval essay by Boethius (died 525 A. D.), *De Consolatione Philosophiæ*, first

translated into Anglo-Saxon by King Alfred. It is unlikely that Chaucer wrote much during the interval between the two Italian journeys, but shortly after the second visit he produced what, next to *The Canterbury Tales*, is the poet's greatest success. This is the *Troilus and Criseyde*, a love romance based upon a much longer poem, *Il Filostrato*, or *Love's Victim*, by Boccaccio. Chaucer's poem contains over 8000 lines, and not more than a third of the whole is to be recognized as borrowed from its original. In this work the poet first reveals that wonderful story-telling power which has made him famous among all makers of imaginative literature. *Troilus and Criseyde* contains in great degree the spirit of the modern novel. Love and love's fickleness is the theme, and the characters of Troilus, Criseyde, and the wily, coarse-natured Pandar are developed with the finest art.

Thus does the poem begin: —

> "The double sorowe of Troilus to tellen
> That was the Kinge Priamus' sone of Troye,
> In lovyng how hise aventures fellen
> From wo to welle, and after out of joye,
> My purpos is, er that I parte fro ye
> Thesiphone, thou help me for tendyte!
> This woful vers, that wepen as I wryte!"

Chaucer's Allegories.

Besides this metrical romance, the most important poems of Chaucer's second period are two allegories: *The Parlement of Foules*, or *Assembly of Birds*, and *The Hous of Fame*. The first has a political significance and celebrates the wooing of Anne of Bohemia in 1382 by the poet's master, Richard II. The other poem was a much longer work. It is somewhat in the spirit of Dante, and recounts the poet's visit, in his dream, to the glittering hall of Fame, whither a great golden eagle carries him. Here upon a mountain of ice are carved

the illustrious names of every age; only those of the ancient world are best preserved, since they are graven on the shady side. The house of Rumor is also visited, but its description is incomplete. In this brief personal touch, the poet permits a glimpse of himself. He represents Jove's Eagle addressing him thus: —

> "Not of thy verray neyghebores,
> That dwellen almost at thy dores,
> Thou herest neither that ne this;
> For whan thy labour doon al is,
> Thou gost hoom to thy hous anon,
> And, also dombe as any stoon,
> Thou sittest at another boke,
> Til fully daswed is thy loke,
> And livest thus as an hermyte." [1]

The Hous of Fame was finished in 1384.

The last period of Chaucer's life falls in the troubled times which perplexed his contemporary Gower, and inspired the last grim visions of Langland, — the years which justified the forebodings and rebukes of Wyclif. Although in 1386 the poet took his seat in Parliament as Knight of the shire for Kent, his fortunes quickly turned. In that same year, through a combination of the nobles, Richard was compelled to transfer his authority to a regency controlled by the Duke of Gloucester.[2] John of Gaunt was absent temporarily from the kingdom, and the party with which Chaucer was identified lost completely for the time its prestige. The poet found no favor with those who now assumed the power. His offices and privileges were taken from him, and he fell even into penury. His misfortunes were aggravated by the death of his wife Philippa in 1387. A brief period of prosperity

The Third Period.

[1] Book ii. 140.

[2] Of this and subsequent events, a vivid picture is given in Shakespeare's historical drama of *Richard II.*

came in 1389, but Chaucer was again in distress shortly after. In 1391 he was entirely dependent upon the generosity of his old patron, John of Gaunt.

The spirit of the poet was altered; not that he grew morose, but that naturally enough a sober melancholy crept into his verse. The chastening of his own experience affected, not unwholesomely, the tone of his compositions. A good illustration of his changing mood is seen in the serious short poem, *Fle fro the Pres*:—

"Fle fro the pres and dwelle with soth fastnesse;
Suffice the thy good though hit be smale;
For horde hath hate and clymbyng tikelnesse,
Pres hath envye and wele is blent over alle;
Savour no more than the behove shalle,
Reule wel thyself that other folk canst rede,
And trouthe the shall delyver, hit ys no drede.
. . . . . .
That the ys sent recyve in buxumnesse,
The wrastlynge of this world asketh a fall;
Her is no home, her is but wyldernesse.
Forth, pilgrime! Forth, best, out of thy stalle!
Look up on hye and thonke God of alle;
Weyve thy luste and let thy gost the lede,
And trouthe the shall delyver, hit ys no drede!"

In *The Legende of Goode Women*, a poem of 2500 lines and incomplete, Chaucer now found heart to write in praise of woman's faithful love.

But this last period of the poet's life is made memorable by the creation of his crowning work. It is as the author of *The Canterbury Tales* that we best know Geoffrey Chaucer; and this great work stands forth as the undisputed masterpiece of English literature throughout the entire Middle English Period. The composition of portions of this work occupied the poet at different periods, but the definite plan of the masterpiece as a whole belongs to the last ten or twelve years of his life.

The idea of such an arrangement of entertaining narratives as Chaucer here brings together may have been suggested by the *Decameron* of the Italian Boccaccio, with which it seems highly probable that the English poet was familiar. Boccaccio's device to secure an artificial unity for his series of detached stories is comparatively simple. He presents, in a lovely villa amid the cypresses and olive trees on the hillside overlooking Florence, a gay party of ten lords and ladies who have fled the city because of the plague. They are bound to introduce no news from without that is not agreeable. They seat themselves in the delightful shade of the grove, and relate to each other the tales which pleasantly enable them to forget the awful suffering of the afflicted city. The English poet is peculiarly happy in the artifice which provides the machinery of his plan. He hits upon a characteristic incident of English life, — the passage of a company of pilgrims to the shrine of St. Thomas à Becket at Canterbury; an occurrence, not infrequent, that permitted the picturesque grouping of many national types that meet us in *The Canterbury Tales*. The most familiar portion of Chaucer's works is the famous *Prologue*, in which the poet so happily describes his party and accounts for his own presence in the group. These 850 lines, setting forth the intention of the book and vividly presenting the nine and twenty pilgrims, one by one, is a masterpiece of literature, and the best example left us of our first great poet's genial insight into character, and his superb power in portraying human nature realistically. The personages that figured in Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* passed immediately into literary immortality, and more than one skillful painter has transferred Chaucer's unmistakable portraits to his canvas. But one thing must be

The Canterbury Tales.

emphasized: the *Tales* are to be regarded as parts of a natural and unified, even if not a completed, work. Whether a part of the original purpose or not, *The Canterbury Tales* as a whole present a vivid picture of English life and character in Chaucer's day. Thanks to the skillful grouping, the use of the "links" that introduce the several tales, and the bits of dialogue which intervene, suggesting coincidently the progress of the pilgrims and the movement of the narrative — above all to the dramatic skill which fits so appropriately to character and rank the quality of the stories told — we have here a series of subtle portraits of English *men and women* as Chaucer knew them and interpreted their lives to us. Unfortunately the poet did not finish his work. The plan provided that each pilgrim should recount two stories on the way to Canterbury and two returning; but the narrative is broken before the company reaches its destination, and only twenty-four tales are told.

Chaucer's Death.

The last year of Chaucer's life saw a brief betterment of the fortunes which had proved so variable. Henry Bolingbroke ascended the throne as King Henry IV. in September, 1399. To him the poet addressed his humorous but pathetic *Compleynt to his Purs.* A pension of forty pounds was settled upon him at once, and Chaucer leased a house in Westminster in December of that year. But hardly a twelvemonth of life remained to him. He died October 25, 1400, and was the first of the poets to be laid in that historic corner of the Abbey which has been consecrated by their remains.

Appreciation of Chaucer.

Thus the life and work of Geoffrey Chaucer are complete. A lover of books and a careful reader of all the literatures then existing, he was no less a lover of nature in all her forms. The

outside world was full of charm to him, and his confession is prettily recorded in terms familiar to all readers of his works: —

"And as for me, tho that I konne but lyte,
On bokes for to rede I me delyte
And in myn herte have hem in reverence
And to hem give I feyth and full credence
So hertely that ther is game noon
That fro my bokes maketh me to goon,
But yt be seldom on the holy day,
Save certeynly, whan that the moneth of May
Is comen, and that I here the foules singe
And that the floures gynnen for to springe —
Farewel my boke, and my devocioun!" [1]

The student who knows Chaucer only in his *Prologue* will hardly appreciate this poet's ability to describe the various phases of nature's loveliness. Thus does the sun rise on Palamon and Arcite: —

"The bisy larke, messager of day,
Salueth in hir song the morwe gray;
And fiery Phebus riseth up so brighte,
That al the orient laugheth of the lighte,
And with his stremes dryeth in the greves
The silver droppes hangyng on the leves." [2]

Again the bright hues of nature, the fresh coolness of the atmosphere, the abounding life of bough and brook, are figured forth in these smoothly flowing lines: —

"A gardyn saw I ful of blospemy bowys
Upon a river in a grene mede,
There as ther swetnesse everemore i-now is;
With flouris white, blewe, and yelwe, and rede,
And colde welle-stremys, no-thyng dede,
That swemyn ful of smale fishes lite,
With fynnys rede and skalys sylvyr bryghte,
On every bow the bryddis herde I synge
With voys of aungel in here armonye." [3]

[1] *The Legende of Goode Women*, Prologue, ll. 30–39. Compare the lines following, also the poet's description of the daisy, ll. 171–207.

[2] *The Knight's Tale*, ll. 633–638.

[3] *The Parlement of Foules*, ll. 183–191.

But above all to be noted in a study of Chaucer is the unfailing insight and genial charity with which he surveys and understands his fellow men. Their weaknesses and frailties provoke a mild rebuke; but even in his chiding, Chaucer smiles, and the world is constrained to smile sympathetically with him. His grave contemporary, Langland, utterly devoid of humor, — that saving sense of every age, — looks sourly forth on this same world, and straightway puts on sackcloth in a sort of vicarious penitence for its sins. Chaucer plainly loves his fellows and the world he lives in; that which is sent he is able "to receyve in buxumnesse," and thanks God for all. And his life, as we remember, with all its cheery brightness, had its full measure of disappointment and care. Wholesome and kindly, the first of English writers to portray realistically the life and manners of a time, there is no more companionable author in all our literature than Chaucer.

The struggle for usage between the French of the Norman conquerors and the native speech of the Saxons had virtually come to an end before Chaucer began to write. It was in 1362 that English was again officially recognized, and Henry IV. took his oath in 1399, "in the name of Fadir, Son and Holy Gost," the first of English kings since William's time to thus employ on that occasion the native Saxon tongue. But at the middle of the fourteenth century, the language was still an uncertain, rude, confusing mixture of dialect forms, unwieldy and uncouth in the hands of those who aimed at literary style. Chaucer's usage was a revelation to his contemporaries, and although neither they nor his immediate successors were ever able to manipulate its material with the grace and force of the master, his hall-mark, nevertheless, was set upon the literary

diction of the kingdom, and his service in the choice and molding of its phraseology cannot easily be overdrawn.[1]

Suggestions for Study: Chaucer. Texts.

Of complete editions, that edited by W. W. Skeat (Oxford, 1894, 7 vols.) is authoritative. *The Poetical Works of Geoffrey Chaucer*, edited by Arthur Gilman (Houghton, Mifflin and Company, Boston, 1880, 3 vols.), is conveniently arranged, and has an excellent introduction upon "The Times and the Poet." *The Globe Chaucer*, edited by Alfred W. Pollard (Macmillan, 1898), contains the complete text in a single volume. There are numerous editions of the *Prologue*, with, and without, one or more of the *Tales*. Those published by the Clarendon Press are among the best known. The student cannot do better than supply himself with the scholarly edition, by Frank Jewett Mather, Jr., of the *Prologue*, *The Knight's Tale*, and *The Nun's Priest's Tale* (Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1899).

Chaucer's Times.

Two valuable works especially useful in presenting the social conditions of the age are *English Wayfaring Life in the XIVth Century* and *A Literary History of the English People* (Putnam, 1895), both by J. J. Jusserand. See also Wright's *History of Domestic Manners and Sentiments in England during the Middle Ages* and Browne's *Chaucer's England*. Sidney Lanier's *Boy's Froissart* may well be read.

Biography. Criticism.

The essay on *Chaucer*, by J. R. Lowell, in *My Study Windows*, or vol. iv. of Lowell's *Works* (Houghton, Mifflin and Company), is one of the best appreciations of the English poet ever written. Ward's *Chaucer*, in the *English Men of Letters Series*, is a convenient brief biography; still more condensed is the *Chaucer* by A. W. Pollard in *English Literature Primer Series* (Macmillan). The chapters on Chaucer in vol. ii. of Ten Brink's *English Literature* (English translation, Holt) are

[1] Compare on this point, J. R. Lowell, *My Study Windows*, p. 257.

especially commended. Vol. iv. of Morley's *English Writers* also is full of valuable material for the study of the poet. A voluminous work in Chaucer criticism is to be found in Lounsbury's *Studies in Chaucer* (Harper, 1892, 3 vols.). *The Canterbury Tales*, by Saunders, is full of very interesting comment. But above all, let the pupil be careful to read his *Chaucer* itself as the real subject of his study, always remembering that it is the author, and not the commentator, that he desires to know. Any single one of the authorities mentioned may prove sufficient for his purpose now. Let Shakespeare's *Richard II.* and *King Henry IV.* be included.

The Prologue.

The natural beginning for a study of Chaucer's work is the familiar *Prologue to the Canterbury Tales*. Suppose that the student, having become acquainted with the text of its 850 lines, first make a classification of the characters thus introduced. He will find representatives of the Chivalry of Chaucer's time, of the Church, the Professions, the Gentry, of Commerce and Trade. Let him note the breadth of representation thus secured and consider the several classes in their types. Which of the individual characters are most favorably presented? Point out some ironical touches in the portraitures. What is Chaucer's intent in lines 183, 251, 395, 438, 444, 648, 708? Find illustrations of Chaucer's humor: what do you think of its quality? Examine some of the descriptions which present the characters unfavorably. Is the poet severe in his censure? What is his method of suggesting our disapproval? If you are familiar with Langland's *Vision of Piers Plowman*, compare the methods of these two poets. Do you find in the *Prologue* any traces of Chaucer's love of nature as set forth in poetical comparisons? Note lines 170, 268: what similar comparisons do you find in the description of the Shipman, and elsewhere, particularly in the first eighteen verses of the poem.

Now turning more directly to the text, notice some of these details: what is the precise date of the pilgrimage, as set forth in poetical language? Compare lines 12–14 with

the Wife of Bath's wanderings, lines 463–466. Where was Southwark, and where Canterbury? What was the significance of the name *Tabard*, given to the inn? The company of pilgrims is recorded as "Wel nyne and twenty:" do you find this to be exact? What do you think of Chaucer's "setting" of his poem as compared with Boccaccio in the *Decameron?* It is impossible to suggest here a detailed study of the text, but the student should notice carefully some points in the language and vocabulary. For instance, *licour*, *vertu*, *engendred*, *flour*, are French words developed out of Latin forms: see how many words of similar origin are to be found in the first forty lines. Compare what Lowell says in his essay (*My Study Windows*, p. 257) upon Chaucer's diction.

Holt and *heeth*, *fowles*, *halwes*, are of Teutonic origin; make a list of similar Saxon words in the same forty lines, and note especially those that have changed in form or usage since Chaucer's time. What is the precise meaning of *sorages* (line 11) and *corage* (line 22), *couthe* (line 14)? compare with *can* (line 210) and *coude* (line 467), and elsewhere. In what form does modern English retain this original meaning of the verb? Explain the use of *aventure* (line 25), *forward* (line 33). What other word besides *hostelrye* (line 23) does the poet use for inn? Compare their etymology.

Is Chaucer's *Knyght* to be taken as representing universally the chivalry of his day? What opportunities had the poet had to observe the character of knight and squire? How far had this *Knyght* traveled according to account? What is meant by the term *vileinye* (line 70), *gentil* (line 72)? From the description of the *Squyer*, what seem to have been the duties of his rank? Does the account of his accomplishments indicate a frivolous character? How did the *Yeman* come to know so much of woodcraft? Are you acquainted with Scott's picture of Locksley, the forester, in *Ivanhoe?* In these three portraits note some of the lines which are particularly effective in picturesque quality: e. g. lines 89, 109. Try to discover Chaucer's remarkable gift in portraiture, so

brief, yet so effective. What seems to be Chaucer's feeling toward the *Prioresse?* Her name is recorded: what other of the pilgrims are referred to thus personally? Compare the account of her table manners with the extract, in Skeat's edition of the *Prologue*, from a contemporary book on etiquette. See how much of suggestive description is contained in lines 151–162. It would be interesting to make a special study of the costuming of these pilgrims; the poet gives many details. What ornaments, for example, are worn by the various characters? From Chaucer's portraiture of the *Monk* and the *Frere* what should be our estimate of the classes thus represented? Pick out suggestive passages that indicate their character, — some that are especially good in setting forth their personal appearance. Study the origin and force of the following words: *venerye* (line 166), *chapel* (line 171), *cloistre* (line 181), *wood* (line 184), *pricasour* (line 189), *in good poynt* (line 200), *palfrey* (line 207), *overal* (line 216), *penaunce* (line 223), *tappestere* (line 241), *beggestere* (line 242), *poraille* (line 247), *povre* (line 260).

In the way already suggested, study the remaining portraits; numerous lines for side-study will appear. The guilds, the *ordres foure*, the practice of medicine, the *Pardoner's* tricks, the recipes suggested by the *Cook* — comments upon these topics will be found in many of the texts. Words like *catel* (line 373), *purchas* (line 256), *achat* (line 571), *ounces* (line 677), *persoun* (line 478), *viage* (line 723), *avis* (line 786), *Withsaye* (line 805), should be carefully examined; indeed a close dependence upon a glossary is absolutely essential to an intelligent reading of the poem: too many pupils lazily guess at the meaning of Chaucer's words.

There is no opportunity in these suggestions to refer to pronunciation or to grammatical forms; these matters must be studied with other aids, and will be found discussed in editions like that of Mather, already recommended. When these points are more or less familiar, some portions of the *Prologue* may be learned by heart and repeated often aloud. Effective passages may be selected anywhere, but

the student should certainly commit the first twenty-seven lines of the poem, and parts, if not all, of Chaucer's description of the Oxford *clerk* and the "*poore Persoun of a toun.*" These are special gems.

In proceeding with the study of this tale, remember that Chaucer appears now in a rôle slightly different from that assumed in the *Prologue*. Here we have the story-teller in actual fact, and it must be ours to appreciate the quality of the narrative as such, and to note the marks that make this narrative essentially Chaucerian. The tale itself is not original with Chaucer; the basis of it is found in a romance by Boccaccio, but the treatment of motive, incident, and character is practically Chaucer's. A clear comparison between the English romance and the Italian story is to be found in Mather's introduction, pp. lxi.–lxxiii. As we read, it will be natural to notice the entire appropriateness of ascribing this tale to the Knight, whose character, given in the prologue, is so consistent with the dignified and chivalric tone of the story. The characters of Theseus and Hypolita are met with elsewhere in English literature: are you acquainted with Shakespeare's poetical drama, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*? In studying this narrative, note where the introduction ends and the real story of Palamon and Arcite begins; but in the introductory section notice the effective points in the account of the

Knight's Tale.

> "Companye of ladies, tweye and tweye,
> Ech after other, clad in clothes blake,"

with their piteous cry and the quick response —

> "This gentil duk down from his courser sterte
> With herte pitous, whan he herde hem speke,"

and in description of the war on Thebes, beginning (line 117)

> "The rede statue of Mars with spere and targe,
> So shyneth in his white baner large,
> That alle tho feeldes glitteren up and doun," etc.

Having reached the account of the finding Arcite and Palamon among the wounded, and their subsequent captivity,

what seems to be the prime motive of the story that would naturally develop out of such a situation? Note in order the successive incidents that supply the narrative. Do these incidents occur naturally, or do they seem artificial? With this in mind study carefully the account of the cousins' discovery of Emily in the garden; their sentiments, as each expresses the effect of her beauty, and their subsequent quarrel (lines 204–328). In the same way study the description of Emily (lines 175–197). Find other portions of narrative and descriptive writing in the poem, and point out special excellences or, what seem to you, defects. Note the forceful portraiture of Emetrius and Lygurge (lines 1270–1330). In your own words describe the general appearance of the *lists*, of which the poet furnishes such full details. Now write the story of the *tournament* as recounted in the poem. Characterize the narrative of Arcite's death and funeral: how are you impressed by the account? Show the general fitness of the outcome in the light of Palamon and Arcite's prayers and vows before the encounter. Do you suppose that this appropriate issue of events just happens, or is this singular fulfillment of the prodigies only an evidence of a careful art which foresaw the coincidence before it came? Point out any artistic details of this sort that you discover. What do you think of the portrait of King Theseus himself, — do you find "characterization" sufficient to outline a real personality? Tell what sort of a man he was. What can you say for Emily, the heroine, — is her portraiture distinct? Cite some passages that show the poet's love for nature and enjoyment of natural phenomena. Compare the description of the sunrise (lines 633–638), and numerous single verses scattered through the poem. Here and there one comes on lines which seem to express the poet's own thought, — that give a glimpse of Chaucer's heart. For example, the sentiment (line 903),

"For pitie renneth soone in gentil herte,"

is a favorite with the poet; he uses it thrice elsewhere. A bit of experience is involved in the couplet (lines 1589–1590)

"As sooth is sayd, elde hath greet avantage,
In elde is both wisdom and usage."

Somewhat humorously expressed is the truth (lines 1901–1902)

"And certeinly, ther nature wol nat wirche
Farewel, physik! go ber the man to chirche."

The Knight's tale receives no further introduction than that afforded by the last thirteen verses of the *Prologue;* inasmuch as the Nun's Priest is not formally presented in the *Prologue*, receiving scanty mention as one of *Preestes thre* in the retinue of the Prioress, it may be interesting to read the link-word which follows on conclusion of the Monk's tale and formally begins that of the *Nonne Preest* (lines 8420–8432) — **The Nun's Priest's Tale.**

"This sweete preest, this goodly man, Sir John."

For a full account of the sources of this tale, see Mather's introduction. It is hardly necessary to suggest material for study in this admirable story of *The Cok and Hen.* The mock seriousness of this domestic epic is delightful. Chauntecleer and Pertelote are genuine "characters" in every sense of the word, and by no means confined in their peregrinations to this *poure widwe's* barnyard. Here is an excellent example of the poet's humor, pervasive and yet well in hand, to be read appreciatively and enjoyed.

The development of English literature during the Anglo-Norman period is as follows: —

The Rulers.	Romances.	Chronicles.	Moralizing Verse.
William I. (1066–87).	Norman-French Romance.	*Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* (to 1154).	
Stephen (1135–54).	Anglo-Norman Romance.	Wace's *Brut* (1155).	*Poema Morale* (1160).
	King Horn (13th century).	Layamon's *Brut* (1205).	*Ormulum* (1225?).
Edward III. (1327–77).	Mandeville's *Travels* (1356).	Robert of Gloucester's *Chronicle* (1300?).	*Piers Plowman* (1362).
Richard II. (1377–99).	*Troilus and Criseyde* (1380?).	(English was legally recognized in 1362.)	(Wyclif's Bible was completed about 1382.)
	Confessio Amantis (1385).		
	Canterbury Tales (1400).		

CHAPTER III

THE FIFTEENTH AND SIXTEENTH CENTURIES

FROM CHAUCER TO SHAKESPEARE

I. The Fifteenth Century: The Renascence.
II. The First Half of the Sixteenth Century: From the Accession of Henry VIII. (1509) to the Accession of Elizabeth (1558).
III. Representative Prose and Verse in the Elizabethan Age.
IV. The Development of the English Drama.
V. William Shakespeare and his Successors.

I. THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY: THE RENASCENCE.

THE century immediately following that of Chaucer and his contemporaries is apparently one of the most unproductive in the history of English literature. It is to be recognized, however, as a time of preparation, and not without its important achievements.

The Renascence.

The fifteenth century was the century of the "new birth," or renascence, of learning and art in the life of the modern world. It was a period of invention and discovery, producing results which were momentous in subsequent history. New ideas poured in upon men's minds and greatly changed the manner of thinking in philosophy, art, literature, politics, and religion. The whole of Europe was under the spell of this new-born spirit of light and progress, but the centre of greatest influence and the chief source of power was Italy, the home of Dante and Petrarch;

of da Vinci, Raphael, and Michelangelo; of the Medici family, magnificent patrons of learning and art, and of hundreds of scholars whose names are less familiar, but who created a taste for the literature and thought of the classic age and taught that literature in the schools of Padua, Bologna, Venice, and Florence. This Revival of Letters was stimulated by the fall of Constantinople in 1453, which sent swarms of Greek scholars westward into Europe, bearing precious manuscripts of Greek philosophers and poets to quicken enthusiasm for the study of this new-old literature. In Germany the new spirit of freedom in thought produced the Reformation, and the scholarship of Melanchthon, Reuchlin, and Erasmus. In England these new ideas, heralded in the preceding century by Wyclif and Chaucer, were fostered and taught by Grocyn, Erasmus, Colet, Ascham, and More. New colleges were established at Cambridge and Oxford, and public schools were founded here and there in the kingdom. As feudalism decayed, the rights of the untitled class were recognized and a new independence was given to the commoner.

Most important of all the inventions that make this age remarkable, greatest of all inventions in the far-reaching effects of its use, is that which made possible the printing of books by means of movable types. The process of block-printing from wooden slabs on which were cut the letters of a single page had, to some extent, displaced the painful art of transcribing on parchment and vellum the exquisite copies of the earlier manuscripts; but the use of separate types in the printing of books appears to have been the invention of John Gutenberg, of the German city of Mainz, about 1450. In Germany and the Netherlands the first printers plied their

The Printing-Press.

art, and some time in the last quarter of the century, when the ruinous Wars of the Roses were approaching their conclusion, the Englishman, William Caxton, learned the practice of the craft, and introduced printing into England.

William Caxton, 1422 ?-91.

Caxton was originally in the employ of a silk merchant in London, and had settled in the Low Countries at Bruges. Here he became interested in the new craft and here, in 1474, he put through the press the first book printed in English, *The Recuyell of the Historyes of Troye.* In 1476 Caxton returned to England with a press, the first in the kingdom, which he established at Westminster. The title of the first book from this press is the *Dictes and Sayings of the Philosophers* (1477). The name of this first English printer may well be honored. Not only was Caxton a translator of many texts, but his choice of works for publication is admirable and attests his literary instinct. In 1485 he printed a volume

Sir Thomas Malory, about 1470.

which had been completed fifteen years before by an English writer of whom we know almost nothing, — Malory's *Morte Darthur*, a splendid collection of the tales of King Arthur and his knights, told in vigorous and melodious English prose.

Nearly one hundred volumes, altogether, were printed on Caxton's presses; conspicuous among them two or three editions of *The Canterbury Tales*, and other works of Chaucer, besides the compositions of Lydgate and Gower, his contemporaries.

The Scotch Poets.

Scotland as well as England has a part — and no unworthy one — in the story of the literature common to them both. Early chroniclers among the Scotch had told in verse the exploits of Bruce and Wallace, national heroes of their

Ret chere made our oſt to vs euerychon
g Andꝫ to ſoupere ſette he vs anon
He ſeruedꝫ vs wyth vytayll at the beſt
Strongꝫ was the wyne & wel drynke vs lyſte
A ſemely man our oſte was wyth alle
Forto be a marchal in a lordes halle
A large man he was wyth eyen ſtepe
A feyrer burgeys is ther non in chepe
Goldꝫ of hys ſpeche andꝫ wel was y taught
Andꝫ of manhoodꝫ lackedꝫ he right nought
Eke therto was he right a mery man
Andꝫ aftir ſoupper to pleyen he begän
Andꝫ ſpak of myrthe amongꝫ other thynges
Whan that we hadde made our rekenynges
He ſaydꝫ thus now lordynges treuly
Ye be to me right welcome hertly
For by my trowthe yf I ſhal not lye
I ſaw not thys yeer ſo mery a companye

FACSIMILE OF A PAGE FROM CAXTON'S SECOND EDITION OF CHAUCER'S CANTERBURY TALES, PRINTED ABOUT 1484

(The text reproduced includes lines 747–764 of the *Prologue*, describing the Host and his hospitable welcome to the pilgrims gathered about his table. The artist did not succeed in introducing the entire company of nine and twenty guests who sat down together at the Tabard, but we have no difficulty in recognizing the worthy Knight and his son at the right of the Host, and Madame Eglentine, the lady Prioress, at his left. Next to the young Squire, with face turned more directly to the front, sits Chaucer himself.)

rocky soil, just as the English rhymers of a contemporary or an earlier time had rehearsed the deeds of English champions. But James I. was one of the earliest representatives of the land of Burns and Scott to grace our literature with the beauty and sweetness of genuine song.

King James I., 1394–1437.

In 1405 James, who was then a boy of only eleven years, became a state prisoner at the English court. From that time till his release in 1424 he remained in England, enjoying every privilege save that of freedom, and cultivating his love of music and of verse. While confined at Windsor Castle he saw from his window, one May morning, the beautiful daughter of the Duke of Somerset walking in the castle garden; and the love of the royal youth for this lady inspired *The Kynge's Quhair* (quire, book). In this poem the influence of Chaucer and Gower is obvious; James loyally avowed his discipleship. The King's "quire" contains 197 seven-line stanzas composed in the so-called "rhyme royal," a stanza form originating probably in France; it has held a distinguished place in the compositions of some later poets.

Dunbar and Douglas.

Again, at the close of the century there were in Scotland two poets of considerable imaginative power and artistic skill whose work reflects the spirit of this era, although the best of it appeared after 1500. These were William Dunbar, author of *The Thistle and the Rose* (1503) and *The Golden Targe* (1508); and Gavin Douglas, who wrote *The Palace of Honor* (1501) and translated Ovid and Vergil (1513).

English Poetry.

Of English versifiers there were in the first half of the century two whose names are usually recorded: John Lydgate and Thomas Occleve, unskillful imitators of Geoffrey Chaucer. In the latter

half of this period also lived Stephen Hawes, author of a long, laborious allegory, *The Pastime of Pleasure*. More noteworthy than the labored writings of these men are the rough rhymes and blunt wit of John Skelton, whose life extended over the first quarter of the sixteenth century, and whose verse forms a significant link between the old poetry and the new.

A clergyman by profession, Skelton was endowed with a rough and ready wit which expressed itself with both coarseness and vigor. He studied at the two great universities and received the purely academic honor of *laureate* from each. His scholarship was such that he was appointed tutor to the young prince, afterward King Henry VIII. The greater part of Skelton's verse consists of a rude jingle more indicative of ready wit than of poetic fire. He was better as a satirist than in any other rôle, and in that vein composed his *Bowge* [*Rewards*] *of Courte*, *Colyn Cloute*, and *Why Come Ye not to Courte?* He directed his satires against corruption in Church and State, and even dared a vigorous attack on the powerful Wolsey, whose anger the poet escaped only by taking sanctuary at Westminster, where he died in 1529. Of his various effusions Skelton himself declares: —

John Skelton, 1460-1529.

> "Though my ryme be ragged
> Tattered and jagged,
> Rudely rain-beaten,
> Rust and moth-eaten,
> If ye take well therewith,
> It hath in it some pith."

Perhaps this is the best that can be said for Skelton's poetry, although there are among his efforts a few compositions that show real poetic merit.

A distinct literary product of the fifteenth century, by far the most impressive illustration of genuine

poetic power that it produced, is the voluminous collection of Scotch and Border Ballads, the greater part of which seem to have had their origin during this period. Folk poetry in the truest sense, these ballads represent the work of unknown authors. Their material is that which naturally impresses itself on the popular mind: stirring chronicles of war, the pathetic and the romantic incidents of man's common experience, the mysterious occurrences that imply a supernatural source. The treatment is invariably simple and naïve, while the very artlessness of the narrative appeals with unusual force to the imagination and emotions of the reader. Of one of the most famous ballads, *Chevy Chase*, Sir Philip Sidney declared that its recital moved his heart more than a trumpet. Familiar among these ballads, at least by name, are those *Lytell Gestes of Robin Hood* which relate the bold deeds of that "good outlaw" of Sherwood, and of his comrades, Little John and Friar Tuck. The pathetic songs of *The Two Children in the Wood*, *Patient Grissel*, and *The Nutbrowne Maid*, belong to another interesting class of these folk poems, while the weird ballads of *The Twa Corbies* and *The Cruel Sister* illustrate another.

The Ballads.

A famous collection of these ballads was brought together by Bishop Percy, and published in 1765 under the title of *Percy's Reliques of Ancient English Poetry*. Sir Walter Scott, who was irresistibly attracted toward such material, gathered a similar collection, published in 1802, as *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*. An exhaustive study of these ballads is found in Professor Child's *English and Scottish Popular Ballads*.[1]

[1] See also *English and Scottish Popular Ballads* (edited from the edition of F. J. Child), 1 vol., by Helen C. Sargent and George

II. THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY.

To the Accession of Elizabeth, 1558.

However sluggish its development through the period just considered, in the time of Henry VIII. (1509–47) English literature took a new start. In both prose and verse the spirit of the Renascence is clearly seen, and it is not difficult to trace the forces which reached their climax in the creations of the Elizabethan age. The impulse of the New Learning is especially distinct in the prose of Sir Thomas More, William Tyndale, and Roger Ascham. The development of modern English verse is found in the poems of Sir Thomas Wyatt and Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey.

Among the scholars who gave distinction intellectually to the reign of Henry VIII., there is none better known for integrity as well as wisdom than Sir Thomas More, the author of *Utopia*. More was born in London in 1480. He studied law, but was fonder of his Greek texts than of his legal practice. Nevertheless he advanced rapidly at court, and on the death of Wolsey was appointed Lord High Chancellor by the king. But the troublous years of Henry's reign soon followed; and in the midst of events which caused the wreck of many a career, Sir Thomas More fell a victim to his religious convictions, and paid with his life the penalty of opposing Henry's will.

Sir Thomas More, 1480–1535.

More's *Life of Edward V.* (1513; printed 1557) is the first essay in careful history that we possess. His *Utopia* (written in Latin, and printed at Louvain in 1516; translated into English by Ralph Robinson in 1551) is one of our earliest studies in the field of

L. Kittredge (Houghton, Mifflin & Co.), and Gummere's *Old English Ballads* (Ginn).

social science. The narrative tells of a wonderful country, the State of Nowhere, — a land where religion is left to the individual conscience, and war is considered an evil; where citizens study the problems of labor and crime, and seek how to promote the interests of public health, education, and comfort. The *Utopia* was a direct product of the New Learning, and was instinct with the genius of common sense. Dream though it was, much of its theory has worked its way into the constitution of modern England; and the book has inspired many imitators in this field.

William Tyndale, 1490-1536.

Another industrious scholar, exactly contemporaneous with More, but one who, in the struggle attendant on the Reformation, was enrolled upon the Protestant side, was William Tyndale. Tyndale was a second Wyclif. Early in life he avowed his sympathy with Luther and his followers, declaring his purpose to make it possible for every English ploughboy to know the Scriptures well. His translation of the New Testament was made in Antwerp and was printed in 1525. The rapid circulation of Tyndale's version through Europe and England roused bitter opposition from the adherents of the pope, — an opposition in which Sir Thomas More was conspicuous, — and the reformer was compelled to find asylums in various lands. In these retreats he continued his translation of the Old Testament; but while his work was still fragmentary, Tyndale was betrayed to his enemies; after imprisonment for about two years, he was strangled at the stake, and his body was burned.

The English Bible.

It was Tyndale's version, made complete by additions from the work of Miles Coverdale, Bishop of Exeter, — who, in 1535, published the first printed translation of the entire Bible, — that formed the basis of the revised translation which ap-

peared under Archbishop Cranmer's sanction in 1540, — usually called *Cranmer's Bible*, or, from its size, *The Great Bible*. Thus the work begun in the quiet rectory at Lutterworth by John Wyclif, first of English reformers, proceeded under conditions sometimes hostile, sometimes friendly. The history of the English Bible is indeed full of intense dramatic interest, for in the record of our literature no other book has held such intimate relation to the very lives and hearts of the English people. There are memories of old translators followed in death by the savage bitterness of persecution which in life they had escaped; of the rummaging of students' chambers, the official search through the mansions of the rich, and the humbler homes of peasants and mechanics, to find the sacred copies which had been proscribed; pictures of bonfires in the churchyard of Saint Paul's, with Wolsey sternly looking on, magnificently dressed in the purple and scarlet of his ceremonial robes, while in the midst of a great crowd, some jeering though others wept, the confiscated Bibles were emptied from huge baskets upon the flames. Yet fifteen years later, still in Henry's time, Bibles were, by royal order, placed in the churches of England, and readers appointed who read in loud, clear tones to the thousands that came at stated times to hear the word of God. The famous *Geneva Bible*, beloved by the Puritans, in the preparation of which Miles Coverdale, an exile in his old age, had assisted, was published in 1560; and several translations less noted were in use during Elizabeth's reign. It was, however, in the time of her successor that the *Authorized*, or *King James*, version was produced. In its preparation fifty of the most prominent scholars were engaged. At Cambridge, at Oxford, and at Westminster, they worked in groups, and met at intervals to compare and criticise their work.

The labor of translation was finished in three years, and in 1611 the Bible was published with an address to the king. Again the work of Tyndale was practically the foundation upon which these new translators built, and it is thus to this early reformer that we are indebted largely for the splendid diction of that version of the Scriptures which is still in common use, and which more than any other book has inspired the style of our best English prose.

Roger Ascham, 1515-68.

A particularly attractive figure among the scholarly Englishmen of this time was Roger Ascham, generally known as the tutor of the Lady Jane Grey and of the Princess, afterward Queen, Elizabeth. Dependent upon friendly assistance in securing an education, Ascham took his bachelor's degree at Cambridge in 1531, and became a fellow of the University in the following year. The young student was soon recognized as an ardent enthusiast for the New Learning, and his room became the resort for many who came to hear him read and explain the Greek. But Roger Ascham was more than a bookworm; like Geoffrey Chaucer he was willing to drop his book and his devotion for the relaxation and exercise of the open air; and when the king returned from a campaign in France in 1545, Ascham presented to him a work on archery entitled *Toxophilus*, in which, following the method of dialogue, he sets forth the advantages of this exercise to England, morally as well as physically, and because of the importance of archery at that period, for purposes of national defence. Pleased with the essay, Henry bestowed upon its author a pension of ten pounds.

In 1563, during a conversation with several gentlemen of note, some expression of his opinion on the subject of education led to the writing of Ascham's *School-*

master, — a work which reveals a wise sympathy with the minds to be taught and trained.

Ascham's personality must have been as amiable as it was studious. Tactful and genial, he held the confidence of four sovereigns, some of whom were not noted for their constancy. He was rewarded by Henry, and honored by Edward; though a Protestant, and never suspected of undue subserviency in the matter of religious conviction, he was retained by Mary in the position of Latin Secretary, to which he had been appointed previous to her reign; and under Elizabeth he continued in that responsible office.

Ascham has been described as a great Greek scholar: his position as Latin Secretary for many years attests his proficiency in that language also; but it is as a writer of English, remarkable for its many excellencies of style, that this author is to be remembered now. The following passage from *Toxophilus*, very near the close of the second book, will serve to illustrate the quality of Ascham's composition, and may be taken as a good example of the best sixteenth-century prose: —

"For having a man's eye always on his mark, is the only way to shoot straight; yea, and I suppose, so ready and easy a way, if it be learned in youth, and confirmed with use, that a man shall never miss therein. . . . Some men wonder why, in casting a man's eye at the mark, the hand should go straight: surely if he considered the nature of a man's eye, he would not wonder at it: for this I am certain of, that no servant to his master, no child to his father, is so obedient, as every joint and piece of the body is to do whatsoever the eye bids. The eye is the guide, the ruler, and the succorer of all the other parts. The hand, the foot, and other members, dare do nothing without the eye, as doth appear on the night and dark corners. The eye is the very tongue wherewith wit and reason doth speak to

every part of the body, and the wit doth not so soon signify a thing by the eye, as every part is ready to follow, or rather prevent [anticipate] the bidding of the eye."

The New Poetry.

Under the impulse of the various influences now so active, poetry began in the time of Henry VIII. to respond to the spirit of the Renascence, and to assume the form and manner that we associate with modern English verse. We find the actual beginnings in the work of Wyatt and Surrey, whose names are appropriately joined in common reference. Although Surrey was some fifteen years younger than Wyatt, the two were brought together by friendship, as well as by a common taste for letters, and the younger poet followed the elder to some extent as his disciple in the new art. Both were strongly influenced by contact with Italian literature, and both adopted the models of Italian verse. Wyatt introduced *the sonnet*, and Surrey was the first of English poets to use *blank verse*. The history of both men is closely involved with that of the period in which they lived, and their work is charged with the spirit of that romantic time.

Sir Thomas Wyatt, 1503-42.

Wyatt was a native of Kent. His education he received at Cambridge, where he took the master's degree in 1520. Introduced at court by his father, who had enjoyed the favor of Henry VII. and continued to hold responsible relations to the court of his successor, young Thomas Wyatt received early recognition from Henry VIII. In 1526 he was in the suite of Sir Thomas Cheney, a member of the privy council dispatched on a mission to the king of France; in the next year he joined the company of Sir John Russell, special ambassador to Rome, and with that nobleman traveled in Italy. At various times Wyatt was employed thus upon the king's busi-

ness, and for two years served as resident ambassador at the court of Charles V. in Spain. Such intercourse made Wyatt perfectly familiar with the best literature of his age, and the natural influence of such contact is seen in his verse. Wyatt's fortunes suffered now and then, as did those of most men who held prominent place at Henry's court; he was at least twice a prisoner in the Tower, once in serious peril of his life, but rather because of jealous enemies than of his sovereign's displeasure. All these experiences of the uncertain tenure of high estate are echoed in Wyatt's more serious verse. But the king's favor stood the courtier-poet in good stead; the final illness which resulted in his death was contracted while upon a mission of honor attending the reception of royal guests.

Wyatt was a maker of verse all his life. In his early poems there is more of rough rhyming than of melody; but he did compose some charming measures, as, for example, in one lyric often quoted: —

> "Blame not my Lute! for he must sound
> Of this or that as liketh me;
> For lack of wit the Lute is bound
> To give such tunes as pleaseth me;
> Though my songs be somewhat strange,
> And speak such words as touch thy change,
> Blame not my Lute!"

In great variety of rhyme and metre Sir Thomas experimented with the possibilities of our English versification, incidentally clearing the way for many a greater poet after him. Besides his numerous "songs and sonnets," mainly love poems, Wyatt wrote three excellent satires: *Of the Mean and Sure Estate*, *Of the Courtier's Life*, and *How to Use the Court and Himself therein*. He also attempted a paraphrase of the Penitential Psalms. His most important contribution to literature was his adoption of the sonnet, a

poetical form used by the Italian poet Petrarch, and in various modifications familiar in all literatures of a later time.[1]

The following poem may serve to illustrate the poet's metres, and also the common theme of his song: —

"THE LOVER DESCRIBETH HIS BEING STRICKEN WITH SIGHT OF HIS LOVE.

"The lively sparks that issue from those eyes,
Against the which there vaileth no defence,
Have pierc'd my heart, and done it none offence,
With quaking pleasure more than once or twice.
Was never man could any thing devise,
Sunbeams to turn with so great vehemence
To daze man's sight as by their bright presence
Dazed am I; much like unto the guise
Of one stricken with dint of lightning,
Blind with the stroke, and crying here and there;
So call I for help, I not [know not] when nor where,
The pain of my fall patiently bearing:
For straight after the blaze, as is no wonder,
Of deadly noise hear I the fearful thunder."

The love poetry of this period is not to be taken too seriously. Dante's Beatrice and Petrarch's Laura were reduplicated many times in the fancy of the Elizabethan poets, while Wyatt and Surrey both seem to have given an English model to these so-called *Amourists*. There is a possibility, however, that Wyatt, in the sonnet quoted and in other poems more direct in their allusion, is addressing no less a personage than the fascinating Anne Boleyn.

Surrey, who with Wyatt has the distinction of head-

[1] The sonnet structure should be well studied. It is deemed the most perfect of verse arrangements, and has been employed with varying success by all the greater — and most of the lesser — poets since Wyatt's day. The sonnet by Wordsworth *On the Sonnet* should be read by pupils as an ingenious exercise in this form of versification. Refer also to *The Sonnet, its Origin, Structure, etc.*, by Charles Tomlinson (Murray).

ing the "courtly makers" of the next three reigns, has generally received the larger share of honor as a versifier. Possibly Wyatt has been underrated somewhat in this comparison, but Surrey's verse has more ease and elegance, and his metres are more correct than Wyatt's, if the latter is to be judged by his weakest productions. Surrey was born about 1518, the son of the Duke of Norfolk. Like Wyatt he was popular at court, and like the elder poet also he enjoyed extended visits in France and Italy. In 1544 the Earl served as marshal of the army invading France, and in the following year commanded at Guisnes and Boulogne. Meeting with defeat, Surrey was superseded, and was afterward, for some indiscretion of speech, imprisoned at Windsor. Not so successful as Wyatt in holding the royal favor, the Earl of Surrey, together with his father, fell a victim to the irascibility of Henry's last years. Only a few days before the death of the king, Surrey was executed for treason, on a charge of having quartered the arms of Edward the Confessor on his shield, — a fact which was distorted into a design against the throne.

Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey, 1518-47.

Surrey's work is less voluminous than Wyatt's; it includes sonnets, poems in various metres, paraphrases of *Ecclesiastes* and some of the *Psalms*, and a translation in blank verse of the second and fourth books of Vergil's *Æneid*. The Lady Geraldine, whose identity has not been satisfactorily determined, is the fair one to whom Surrey's love songs are addressed. The following will show the spirit of his verse, and may be compared with the sonnet already quoted from his friend: —

"Description and Praise of his Love Geraldine.

"From Tuscane came my Lady's worthy race;
Fair Florence was sometime her ancient seat.

> The western isle whose pleasant shore doth face
> Wild Camber's cliffs, did give her lively heat.
> Foster'd she was with milk of Irish breast:
> Her sire an Earl; her dame of Prince's blood.
> From tender years in Britain doth she rest,
> With Kinges child; where she tasteth costly food.
> Hunsdon did first present her to mine eyen:
> Bright is her hue, and Geraldine she hight.
> Hampton me taught to wish her first for mine;
> And Windsor, alas! doth chase me from her sight.
> Her beauty of kind; her virtues from above:
> Happy is he that can obtain her love!"[1]

Tottel's Miscellany, 1557.

The works of these two poets were not written for the public eye; they circulated in manuscript only from hand to hand among the friends who composed the courtly circle in which these writers moved. It was not until 1557 that the "songs and sonnets" of Wyatt and Surrey appeared in print, forming the larger part of a collection known as *Tottel's Miscellany*, which included the poems of several other writers, some of whom are still untraced. Tottel's publication was the first of a numerous series of such volumes put forth by enterprising publishers, indicating the growing love of poetry, and preserving some worthy compositions which might otherwise have been lost.

III. REPRESENTATIVE PROSE AND VERSE IN THE ELIZABETHAN AGE.

Sir Philip Sidney, 1554-86.

The man who by common consent has been selected as the choicest type of Elizabethan chivalry is the brave and courtly gentleman, Sir Philip Sidney. Among all the brilliant circle that waited upon the queen, there was none more gifted or more admirable than he. Sidney was born at Penshurst, in Kent. He attended both universities, and

[1] The poems of Wyatt and Surrey, with a memoir of each, are published in the Riverside Edition by Houghton, Mifflin and Company.

spent three years in travel on the Continent. He was in Paris at the time of the Huguenot massacres, and narrowly escaped death on the fearful day of St. Bartholomew. Returning to England in his twenty-first year, the young noble was introduced at court by his uncle, the famous Leicester, and quickly charmed the fancy of the queen, who referred to him as "the jewel of her dominions" and showered him with her favors. But Sidney was as high-spirited as he was gallant, and offended by the inconsistencies and fickleness of Elizabeth, he withdrew after some five years of the courtier's life to the estate of his sister, the Countess of Pembroke, at Wilton. Later he was again at court; was knighted in 1583; in 1585 was ordered to accompany the unfortunate expedition of Leicester into the Netherlands, and the year following received his death-wound in a chivalrous charge beneath the walls of Zutphen.

Like both Wyatt and Surrey, whose careers in some respects had been prototypes of his own, Sir Philip Sidney had found leisure at court, or in the retirement of Penshurst and Wilton, to cultivate the literary art in various fields. About 1580 he wrote a *Defence of Poesy*, notable as the first true essay in criticism in our language. He was also the author of a series of sonnets and songs entitled *Astrophel and Stella*. Although not published until 1591, these poems were written at intervals following the year 1581, when the poet suddenly discovered his affection for Penelope Devereux, daughter of the Earl of Essex, who in that year wedded a nobleman of the court. There seems to be no question of the sincerity of the passion rehearsed in these love poems, one hundred and twenty in all; and they have taken their place with the finest compositions of this sort in our literature. Besides

this group of passionate love sonnets, Sir Philip Sidney left an elaborate pastoral romance entitled *Arcadia*. This voluminous work, which may be taken as typical of numerous efforts in the field of prose fiction belonging to this time, was never designed for publication. In the year 1580 Sidney had begun its composition solely for the diversion of his sister, the Countess, charging her to destroy the manuscript as it was read; but four years after Sidney's death *The Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia* was published at London. It became the most popular romance of the day, inspiring many imitators, and, like Lyly's *Euphues*,[1] even setting a model of conversational form among the ladies and gentlemen of Elizabeth's court.

Hardly less brilliant than Sidney, and even more versatile, Sir Walter Raleigh, the navigator of strange seas, soldier, explorer, colonizer, accomplished gentleman of the court, lived to its full the eventful life so characteristic of his age. Born in Devonshire, educated at Oxford, Raleigh began his adventurous career at seventeen years of age as a volunteer in the cause of the French Protestants. Later he was a prominent figure in many of the daring enterprises which give distinction to the time, and was with the fleet which crushed the Great Armada in 1588. The tradition of his romantic introduction to Elizabeth, when he is said to have thrown his rich plush cloak upon the wet shore at Greenwich that the flattered queen might walk with unsoiled slipper, whether fact or fiction, is thoroughly characteristic of the man and of the age. Raleigh quickly rose in favor. A royal grant of 12,000 acres in Ireland made him a neighbor of Edmund Spenser, and furnished an opportunity for the interesting friendship celebrated

Sir Walter Raleigh, 1552-1618.

[1] See page 124.

by the poet of *The Faerie Queene*. Under the rule of James, Raleigh found only ingratitude and misfortune. For thirteen years a prisoner in the Tower under charges of treason, he was released, made an unfortunate expedition to the Orinoco in search of gold, returned in disappointment and disgrace, and shortly after, was beheaded upon the old-time charge; Sir Francis Bacon was conspicuously active in the proceedings against him.

During the period of his long imprisonment Raleigh began a voluminous *History of the World*. The work starts with the Creation, as was customary among the early historians, and closes with the second Macedonian War, B. C. 168. It is learned and eloquent, and is filled with contemplations and comparisons inspired by the men and the events discussed. The shadow of his own misfortune falls at times upon its pages; and the conclusion of the *History* takes the form of an apostrophe to Death, which may serve to suggest the serious tone of the work, and also illustrate the author's style: — **His Works.**

"Oh, eloquent, just, and mighty Death! whom none could advise, thou hast persuaded; what none hath dared, thou hast done; and whom all the world hath flattered, thou only hast cast out of the world, and despised; thou hast drawn together all the far-stretched greatness, all the pride, cruelty and ambition of man, and covered it over with these two narrow words — *Hic Jacet.*"

Besides his *History*, Raleigh wrote *The Discovery of the Large, Rich and Beautiful Empire of Guiana* (1596), a narrative of his voyage to the Orinoco;[1] various other "accounts;" and many poems, some of which were of merit sufficient to draw from Spenser a

[1] Published in *Cassell's National Library*, ten cents.

complimentary allusion to Raleigh as the "Summer's Nightingale."

Edmund Spenser, 1552-99.

The climax in that development of English poetry which gives such lustre to the Elizabethan age is found in the work of Edmund Spenser, to whom Charles Lamb gave the title of "The Poet's Poet." Born in London, as was Chaucer before him, and Milton, who was later to succeed him as a master in the field of epic poetry, he entered into few of the comfortable advantages which enriched the boyhood of those poets. His parents were poor, although connected, as the poet tells us, with "an house of ancient fame."

His name is mentioned among those of six poor scholars of the Merchant Tailors' School who received assistance from a generous country squire; and in 1569 we find him entered at the University of Cambridge as a sizar, which means that he earned his way by serving in the dining-hall, and performing other duties of a like character. At the University began the friendship with Gabriel Harvey, a fellow student, who probably introduced the poet to Sidney and the Earl of Leicester. In 1576 Spenser left Cambridge and found some employment in the north of England; and here he first showed the quality of his poetic gifts.

The Shepherd's Calendar.

Spenser's first important composition was a set of twelve eclogues, one for each month of the year. When published in 1579, the work was dedicated to Sir Philip Sidney, between whom and Spenser an intimate friendship had already been formed. It is interesting to see the influence of the New Learning in Spenser's work. The spirit of Vergil and of Theocritus speaks again through the classical machinery of pastoral eclogue, a form of poetry which at once laid hold of the pleased imagina-

tion of the age; indeed, so attractive did this Arcadian setting appear, that in all forms of imaginative composition, in prose romance, and in dramatic poetry, the loves and woes of complaining shepherds seemed a universal theme by which to rouse the sentimental interest of readers. Milton in his *Lycidas* gave a tone of serious dignity to the pastoral. And more than a hundred years after Spenser's day we find the same machinery used in *The Pastorals* of Alexander Pope. But *The Shepherd's Calendar* was full of the limpid sweetness of Spenser's verse, and marked the highest reach of English poetry since Chaucer. Its quality was recognized at once; and the poet was duly honored by the friends secured through Sidney's interest.

In 1580 Spenser was appointed private secretary to Earl Grey of Wilton, Lord Deputy of Ireland; and thenceforth Ireland continued to be the poet's home. The country was in rebellion, and conditions were anything but pleasant. The private secretary embodied his own reflections in a pamphlet called *A View of the Present State of Ireland* (not printed until 1633), which shows sufficiently the bitter harshness of the time. Lord Grey was recalled two years after his appointment, but Spenser was retained in various official positions, and in 1588 was settled at Kilcolman Castle in County Cork. In spite of surroundings so unfavorable to a work of pure imagination, Spenser had been engaged throughout his residence in Ireland upon his great epic. According to a letter to Harvey, this poem had been begun before Spenser left England in 1580. By 1589 three books of the epic had been completed, and in that year were shown to Sir Walter Raleigh, who was now a neighbor of the poet, holding forfeitures on the same estate. In the company of Raleigh, Spenser now came back to

In Ireland.

London to lay his poem at the feet of the queen whose praises he, more sweetly than any other, had sung. A pension of £50 was bestowed upon the poet, and he returned to Ireland to celebrate his visit in the pastoral *Colin Clout's Come Home Again.*

The Faerie Queene.

More than any other work of that age, perhaps, Spenser's masterpiece is typical of the romantic spirit which characterized England in the last decades of the sixteenth century. The political significance in some portions of the allegory, as, for example, the attempt to portray Sidney, Raleigh, Lord Grey, and other noblemen in the heroes of the several cantos; the figuring forth of the person of the queen herself in the character of Gloriana; and the presentation of the false Duessa as typical of Mary Stuart, — this is less noteworthy than the general atmosphere of ideal chivalry and moral struggle which was strikingly in keeping with the thoughts and passions of England in the Elizabethan age. In the person of Arthur, the poet set forth his ideal of perfect manhood, and designed in the twelve books of his work, as planned, to describe successively the quality of his hero in each of the moral virtues as then defined. The greatness of this great poem, however, is not due to the complicated subtilties of the allegory so much as to the extraordinary charm of these winding paths and byways through which the poet leads us in the fairyland of his dream. Although the length of even this half-completed work, and the unavoidable monotony of these unvarying stanzas, do not encourage continuous reading, *The Faerie Queene* still holds its place, one of the greater masterpieces of our literature, a noble epic, rich in imagination and in fancy, expressed in lines which for softness and melody have never been surpassed.

Spenser's early poems were published under the title of *Complaints* in 1591. Besides *The Faerie Queene*, his later works include several elegies; the *Amoretti*, or love sonnets; four *Hymns* in honor of love and beauty, heavenly love and heavenly beauty; the exquisite *Epithalamion*, or song in honor of his marriage in 1594; and another spousal verse, the *Prothalamion*. His lament upon the death of Sidney, entitled *Astrophel*, is the finest of his elegies. In the pastoral manner he begins: — Minor Poems.

"A gentle shepheard borne in Arcady,
Of gentlest race that ever shepheard bore,
About the grassie bancks of Hæmony
Did keepe his sheep, his litle stock and store:
Full carefully he kept them day and night,
In fairest fields; and Astrophel he hight.

"Young Astrophel, the pride of shepheards praise,
Young Astrophel, the rusticke lasses love:
Far passing all the pastors of his daies,
In all that seemly shepheard might behove.
In one thing onely fayling of the best,
That he was not so happie as the rest."

In 1595 Spenser came again to England, bringing three more books of *The Faerie Queene*. For a year he remained the guest of the Earl of Essex, at this period the favorite of the capricious Elizabeth. The new literature was now in hand. Shakespeare had produced his early plays, including *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *Romeo and Juliet*. Ben Jonson was already on the stage; and Francis Bacon, just about publishing the first edition of his famous *Essays*, was enjoying the patronage of Spenser's host. It is inconceivable that the poet failed to enter and enjoy the society of these men. In 1598, after the poet had returned to Ireland, occurred a fierce outbreak of the Irish rebels, which involved the Last Years.

district of Spenser's residence. Kilcolman was attacked and burned, and the unfortunate poet and his family were compelled to flee for their lives. Near the close of the year, Spenser arrived in London in profound distress, and in January, 1599, died at an inn. He was buried near Chaucer in the Abbey, and was mourned as the greatest of English poets.

The Riverside Edition of this poet, edited in three volumes by Francis J. Child, is an authoritative text for the student's purpose. The Globe Edition (Macmillan) contains the works of Spenser in one volume. The Life of Spenser in the *English Men of Letters Series* is by Church.

Suggestions for Study.

For study, take the first two cantos of Book I. of *The Faerie Queene*. Read "A Letter of the Authors" to Sir Walter Raleigh, expounding his intention in the allegory. What is an *allegory?* How many interpretations may be permitted of this poem? Who are the heroes of the first six books? What virtues are typified by them? How does the poet devise to exhibit King Arthur as the quintessence of all the virtues? Explain the political allegory so far as you can.

Examine the structure of the Spenserian stanza, — one of the most perfect stanza forms known. Notice the rhyme order: a — b — a — b — b — c — b — c — c′. Here we have nine verses which would fall into three separate groups did not the repetition of a rhyme bind the parts together. Thus we have a long stanza saved from monotony by the introduction of new rhymes, and secure in its unity because of the repetition of the "b" rhyme. A very effective close for the stanza is found in the last verse, which is longer by two syllables than the other verses; this twelve-syllable verse is called an *Alexandrine*. This peculiar arrangement of verses was found by adding the Alexandrine to the stanza used by Chaucer in his *Monk's Tale*. Most of the later poets have employed this Spenserian stanza: name some of the prominent poems in which it appears.

Read several stanzas of the epic aloud; try to determine for yourself what elements impart the softness and melodiousness to the verse. Note the vowel sounds; the effect of the consonants in combination. Point out the liquids, the long-drawn syllables like *muse*, *deeds*, *meane*, etc.: what is the effect on the ear? Note the repetition of a sound in certain lines, as "*Me*, all to *meane*, the sacred muse *areeds*" (Introd. to canto I. 1–7). What is the allusion in this stanza?

Now, in reading canto I., try to perceive the beauty of rhythm and melody that have made the poem a delight to the ear. Give a thought to the poet's imagination which with such felicity invents so wonderful an array of images and incidents. Examine the details of the narrative. Explain the allegory in the first stanza: the shield; the gravity, boldness, and eagerness of the knight; the lady and her equipment. Why does she lead a lamb? Why is she attended by the dwarf? What is the significance of the storm, the wood, the battle?

Make a list of peculiar verbal forms, obsolete words, etc. What is the meaning of the *y* in ydrad, yclad? Why did the poet choose these forms, which were out of use even in his day? Note the images, especially such continued ones as are found in stanzas XXI. and XXIII. Where are the models that suggest them?

Do not overlook the classical allusions, e. g. in XXXVI., XXXVII., XXXIX. You will find in Book VI. of the *Æneid* the original of Spenser's description of "Morpheus' house" (XXXIX.–XLI.). Compare these stanzas with Thomson's *Castle of Indolence* and Tennyson's *The Lotos Eaters*, with special reference to the dreamy languor of the measure. Spenser declares his indebtedness to Chaucer: what evidence of this do you discover?

Why has the title "The Poets' Poet" been given to Spenser?

Of the many minor authors who might be enumerated as contributors to the literature of the sixteenth century, the following prose writers are most worthy

of mention. They were all theologians, and men of large influence in their generation. JOHN KNOX (1505–72), a bold and uncompromising champion of the Protestant cause, more famous for his public sermons than for his formal publications, wrote a *History of the Scottish Reformation.* JOHN FOX (1517–87), a graduate of Oxford, compiled the *Book of Martyrs*, a work of extraordinary influence in the religious controversies amid which Puritan England was developed. Author of many published discourses, which were marked by great force of character and vigorous expression, was HUGH LATIMER (1470–1555), a convert to Protestantism, who suffered martyrdom by burning in the time of Mary. It was Latimer who, while enduring the agony of the flames, cried out to his fellow sufferer, "Be of good cheer, Master Ridley, and play the man; we shall this day light such a candle, by God's grace, in England, as I trust shall never be put out." One other writer in the last quarter of the century, RICHARD HOOKER (1553–1600), claims attention for the unusual excellence of his style, as seen in the treatise on *Ecclesiastical Polity*, a defense of the English ecclesiastical system. Although of less human interest than the essays of Raleigh or Bacon, this work is regarded as one of the best examples of stately English prose belonging to the time.

Minor Authors.

IV. THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE ENGLISH DRAMA.

One cannot very well appreciate the remarkable display of creative power in the works of Marlowe, Shakespeare, Ben Jonson, and their contemporaries, who does not look before as well as after, examining the sources and origins of all this activity in dramatic composition which so distinguishes the Elizabethan age.

The beginnings of classic drama were in religious rites; the origin of the modern theatre, also, was in the attempt to impress religious truth upon the people. Between the ancient and the modern stage, however, there is no link of immediate connection. From the period of utter decadence, when pagan art was lost amid the brutalities of gladiatorial shows and worse, to the first simple tableaux and pantomimes intended to figure forth the events and facts of sacred history, a wide gap intervenes. And yet the new beginnings were similar in kind to those of the earliest dramatic art. Beginnings.

Perhaps the Easter festivals or the Christmas celebrations of the Church suggested first the pious adaptation of this ancient art of acting to present impressively the facts of the new religion; perhaps in the solemn ritual of the Mass itself there was more than a mere suggestion of theatrical effectiveness in its inevitable appeal to the imagination of humble worshipers. To enforce the lesson of Good Friday, the Crucifix was interred with a simple ceremonial, and on Easter Sunday it was disinterred. Gradually this brief pantomime grew into an elaborate ceremonial. In some recess of the cathedral chapel a tomb was built, with space for watchmen who should represent the Roman guards; and here on Easter morning the assembled congregation, awe-struck but curious, saw the women visit the sepulchre, saw the angels roll away the stone that sealed its entrance, saw Peter and John come running; by and by the return of Mary Magdalene was the signal for one to appear arrayed in the likeness of a gardener, who pronounced the woman's name and vanished. Then the great church was filled with the sound of praise as the service closed with the Easter anthem. St. Francis of Religious Rites.

Assisi (1182–1226) arranged a little scene at Christmas time near his hermitage in the forest. An ox and an ass were baited there, and by the manger he placed a mother and her babe, while a throng of peasant folk watched the tableau silently. This homely scene was repeated elsewhere, and later the adoration of the Magi was included; then the flight into Egypt. In the larger churches Joseph was presented leading the ass, on which sat Mother and Child, from the neighborhood of the high altar down through the nave toward the main entrance, where for a time they rested; meanwhile the slaughter of the Innocents was enacted at the chancel, and after a space the little procession retraced its path, and the play was over.

The Miracle Plays.

Very early in the Christian centuries were the beginnings of these things in France. They appeared in England soon after the Conquest, and in their amplified form these sacred dramas were known as *Miracle Plays*, or *Mysteries*. When the scope of these plays and their elaboration outgrew the limitations of church and ecclesiastic, their presentation was intrusted to the guilds, or great trades companies; and cycles, or groups of plays, were arranged for the stage. Within the series would be included important events of scripture narrative, sometimes extending from the fall of Lucifer to the final judgment. The various guilds were assigned particular scenes, which they presented on large movable platforms called *pageants*, drawn by horses from station to station through the town — a fresh pageant with a new play taking the place of each as it lumbered on to its next appointment. Thus all the scenes of an entire cycle would be enacted before all the inhabitants of a town, although the whole presentation might easily occupy several days. Such a series of

miracle plays was presented regularly in Chester at Whitsuntide. A second important group is that of the Coventry mysteries; the York plays are also famous, and so are the Towneley,[1] or Widkirk, plays. There are twenty-four in the Chester cycle, preserved in a manuscript of the year 1600. These plays had been given at Chester as early as 1268, and their presentation continued down to 1577. The Coventry manuscript dates from the year 1468, and the plays number forty-two. They were regularly performed from the close of the fourteenth century to the close of the sixteenth. There were thirty plays in the Towneley group, and forty-eight in the series given at York. Miracle plays were at first written in Latin; some of them, doubtless, were translated into Norman-French, and finally they appeared in English.

Modifications.

With the secularization of the miracle plays other than sacred elements were speedily added; the moral effect of their performance was sometimes quite other than was desired, and in some localities at least they were discountenanced, if not actually prohibited, by the Church. The natural demand for amusement was a leading force in the development of the realistic portrayal of character. To make fun for the audience, new personages were introduced, like Noah's wife, who is quarrelsome and refuses to enter the Ark until she is threatened with a beating, and is finally bustled aboard by her sons. Servingmen, shepherds, soldiers, became permanent types. Herod was a popular favorite, as he stormed and raved about the scene. Termagant, the traditional deity of the Saracens, was another robust braggart on this early stage. Such creations, though crude, were,

[1] So called from the name of the family in whose possession were the manuscripts.

nevertheless, a real beginning in original characterization, based on types with which these venturesome apprentices were themselves familiar. Indeed there are some notable scenes distinguished by a tragic realism of no inferior type.

The Moralities.

Coincidently with the miracle plays developed the *Moralities;* and these latter — allegories in which the virtues and the vices appeared under their own names — enjoyed a popularity equal to that attained by the earlier religious dramas. The moralities were in existence as far back as Henry VI.'s time (1422–71). The titles of some of the most accessible are: *Lusty Juventus*, *The Castle of Perseverance*, *The World and the Child*, *Hick Scorner*, *Everyman*, *The Marriage of Wit and Wisdom*, *The Four Elements*, *The Trial of Treasure*. The conventional material in these moral plays was the course of Youth, or "Human Nature," on the stage of life. He is beguiled by characters like Hypocrisy, Lust, Avarice, Slander, Jealousy, Abominable Living, Malice, and Discord. On the other hand he is aided by Perseverance, Discretion, Pity, Mercy, Wisdom, Magnanimity, Good Hope, Conscience, and the like. In some of the moralities a controversial war was waged between Romanism and Protestantism; in others the evident purpose is to instruct, and the scene grows tedious because of long and prosy homilies on scientific or moral subjects. Again we find the comic characters the most popular, and as in the miracle plays, some conventional types are introduced; such are the Innkeeper and the Peddler. But most characteristic of these personages are the Devil and the Vice, who swagger through the play together, supplying rough and ready humor to tickle the common folk. The Devil was figured forth with a shaggy skin, a huge false nose,

horns, hoof, and tail. The Vice was costumed like an athlete, and carried a lath sword, with which he belabored the other characters, especially the Devil, although the close of his career was inevitably his descent, on the Devil's shoulders, into Hell. A morality entitled *The Necromancer*, written in 1504 by John Skelton, contains characters drawn from common life.

In the presentation of these moralities professional actors were employed. Their exhibitions were given in the halls of the nobility, in intervals of banquets, and on holidays in the open squares of towns. At an early period companies of players were maintained by noblemen. The Duke of Gloucester, afterward King Richard III., was thus a patron of the drama as early as 1475. Henry VII. (1485–1509) supported two such companies. Henry VIII. maintained three.

The name of *interlude*, sometimes applied to these compositions, is significant of their use in elaborate entertainments, as well as at the feasts, which supplied amusement for court and nobility. As has been stated, the farcical element was generously mingled with the serious. A special development of this class of plays is found in the interludes of John Heywood, who died about the year 1565. These plays, three in number, are entitled: *The Merry Play between Johan the Husband, Tyb his Wife, and Sir John the Priest; The Four P.'s;* and *The Merry Play between the Pardoner and the Friar, the Curate and Neighbor Pratt.* These "merry plays" are scarcely more than dialogues abounding in retort, yet incidentally delineating character with considerable success. Of the three interludes *The Four P.'s* is the best. Four well-known types are introduced: the Palmer, the Pardoner, the Poticary, and the Peddler. Some of these characters had been portrayed by Chau-

The "Interludes" of John Heywood.

cer in his *Tales*, and there is more than a mere suggestion of the earlier portraits in the character plays of Heywood.

The interlude is opened by the Palmer, who recites the extent of his journeyings to distant shrines: —

The Four P.'s.

> "At Jerusalem have I been
> Before Christ's blessed sepulcher:
> The Mount of Calvary have I seen,
> A holy place, you may be sure.
> To Jehosaphat and Olivet
> On foot, God wot, I went right bare;
> Many a salt tear did I sweat
> Before my carcase could come there."

And so on with the list until he is interrupted by the Pardoner, who says: —

> "And when ye have gone as far as ye can,
> For all your labor and ghostly intent,
> Ye will come as wise as ye went."

Then follows a long discussion upon the merit of pilgrimages and pardons, the veracity of pilgrims and pardoners. The Poticary and the Peddler join in the debate, and finally, as the principal argument seems to settle upon the point which is the greater liar, the Pardoner or the Palmer, it is suggested by the Peddler that a genuine contest take place between the two, on the merits of which he himself shall judge. This is agreed to. Some diversion is provided by an exhibition of the relics in the Pardoner's wallet and the contents of the Poticary's chest. Among the treasures of the former are "the blessed jawbone" of All Saints and the great toe of the Trinity. The Pardoner's tale is of his trip to Purgatory and thence to Hell to secure the release of a woman, his one-time friend, and of his success, owing to the Devil's desire to be rid of all women: —

"For all we devils within this den
Have more to do with two women
Than with all the charge we have beside."

The Palmer is surprised at the implication thus cast upon women. In his extended travels, he declares, he has seen five hundred thousand: —

"Yet in all places where I have been,
Of all the women that I have seen,
I never saw or knew in my conscience
Any one woman out of patience."

The Poticary exclaims: "By the Mass, there is a great lie!" The Pardoner: "I never heard a greater, by our Lady!" and the Peddler asks: "A greater! nay, know ye any so great?"

And thus the Palmer wins.

The date of *The Four P.'s* cannot be much later than 1530. The first regular comedy in English was written previous to 1550, by Nicholas Udall, who in 1534 became head master of Eton College, and afterward of Westminster School. Udall was a classical scholar, familiar with the works of Terence and Plautus, and under their influence composed his play *Ralph Roister Doister*, in five acts. The plot is simple and is confined to complications arising from the wooing of Dame Custance, who is betrothed to Gawin Goodluck, by Ralph Roister Doister, a boastful, cowardly fellow; he in turn is the butt and victim of one Matthew Merrygreek, the chief conspirator in the plot.

True Comedy.

It is interesting to note the influence of the classic drama in the development of English comedy. The revival of learning had awakened a new interest in Latin as well as Greek literature. As early as 1520 Plautus had been performed before King Henry VIII.; the comedies of both Plautus and Terence were pre

sented at the court of Elizabeth; Seneca had been translated entire.

Tragedy.

In 1562 there was performed at Whitehall, before the queen, the first serious attempt at genuine tragedy in English. This play, entitled *Gorboduc*, was the work of two students of the Inner Temple, Thomas Norton and Thomas Sackville, afterward Earl of Dorset, Chancellor of the University of Oxford, and Lord High Treasurer of England. The tragedy is modeled after Seneca. The argument thus sets forth the plot:—

"Gorboduc, King of Britain, divided his realm in his lifetime to his sons, Ferrex and Porrex. The sons fell to divisions and dissensions. The younger killed the elder. The mother that more dearly loved the elder, for revenge killed the younger. The people, moved with the cruelty of the fact, rose in rebellion and slew both father and mother. The nobility assembled and most terribly destroyed the rebels. And afterwards, for want of issue of the Prince, whereby the succession of the crown became uncertain, they fell to civil war, in which both they and many of their issues were slain and the land for a long time almost desolate and miserably wasted."

Here certainly is tragic motive in abundance, although it should be noted that, following the classic model, these tragic events are described, not actually enacted upon the scene. Crude and extravagant as it is, this play marks an epoch in the development of the English drama. It was a fortunate choice which led the authors of *Gorboduc* to employ blank verse instead of rhyme, — a form of verse which has been recognized ever since as peculiarly appropriate to the demands of tragedy.

These are but a few of the more prominent landmarks in the early history of the English stage, and

only suggest the manner of its growth. It is to be understood that there were numerous examples of the phases that have been noted, for the development during Elizabeth's reign was rapid. Miracle plays and moralities flourished side by side and continued popular for some years after Shakespeare's birth; it would be strange indeed if in his early life the great playwright himself had not been present at such performances, mingling with the throngs of interested onlookers who trooped to the festivities at Warwick Castle, or at Kenilworth, or on holidays even as far as Coventry, to see the mysteries which were there performed.

Historical Plays.

Moreover, there was an increasing store of dramatic works, the material of which was drawn from life with more or less realistic detail, which embodied, too, in an ever increasing degree the spirit of genuine comedy and tragedy. A most prolific source of such material, rich in dramatic quality, lay at hand in the recently compiled chronicles and histories of England's national existence; and the brilliant achievements of contemporary history which had fired the enthusiasm of Elizabeth's subjects kindled an intense interest in these records of events which had been impressive and momentous in their time. Of the historians who contributed to this material the most important was Raphael Holinshed, whose *Chronicles of England, Scotland, and Ireland*, published in 1577, formed the great storehouse from which were drawn the arguments of a number of popular dramas before Shakespeare had recourse to it for the material used in his own remarkable "histories." Preceding Holinshed in point of time was Edward Hall, whose work, *The Union of the Two Noble Families of Lancaster and York* (1547), supplied its share of the material dealing with

the Wars of the Roses. We find an interesting illustration of this resort to history in the pageant of *King John*, written by Bishop John Bale, probably in the reign of Edward VI. This old play is really a morality; for along with the historical characters there are introduced allegorical personages such as England, Nobility, Civil Order, Treason, and Sedition. A later play, *The Troublesome Reign of John, King of England*, printed in 1591, but written some years previous to that date, has no connection with Bale's work. Other examples of these early historical plays are found in *The True Tragedy of Richard, Duke of York*, and the *First Part of the Contention betwixt the Two Famous Houses of York and Lancaster*, which formed the basis of Shakespeare's *King Henry VI.* *The Famous Victories of Henry V.* was acted previous to 1588, and a Latin play on the career of Richard III. was presented at Cambridge in 1579. A later play on the same subject antedated by several years Shakespeare's tragedy of that title. That Shakespeare himself was intensely stirred by the heroic richness of this historical material is evident in the use he makes of it in his own great "histories." Thus in his *King John*, before the walls of besieged Angiers, Cœur de Lion's son is made to say: —

> "Ha, Majesty! how high thy glory towers,
> When the rich blood of kings is set on fire!
> O, now doth Death line his dead chaps with steel;
> And now he feasts, mousing the flesh of men,
> In undetermin'd differences of kings." [1]

With the passing of miracle plays and moralities, innyards, with their surrounding galleries, became the usual places of dramatic performances. The earliest

[1] Act II. scene i. 350. Compare with this passage the prologue to *King Henry V.*, referred to on page 121.

public playhouse in London, called The Theatre, was built in 1576 by James Burbadge, father of Richard Burbadge, the great actor of tragic parts in Shakespeare's day. Next in date of building was The Curtain.[1] The Rose was opened in 1592 on the Bankside. At Newington Butts there was a playhouse known by the name of that locality. The Globe, most famous of all the London playhouses, was erected in 1599 from the material of the old Theatre, torn down after its owner had built the new Blackfriars Theatre in 1596. The Red Bull, The Fortune, The Cockpit, and The Swan were also standing in Shakespeare's time. In all, the city boasted some dozen theatres of varying use and fame.

The Theatres.

If one would reconstruct an early London playhouse, he should think first of one of those round, or many-sided structures, familiar now in all large cities as used for the exhibition of cycloramas and realistic battle pictures. In buildings similarly shaped, but not entirely roofed over, the greatest English dramas were first performed. A shed-roof projected a little way inside the circle, thus protecting the stage and the tiers of seats that corresponded to our balconies and boxes; the large centre of the theatre was unprotected commonly from either sun or shower, and here the "groundlings" stood elbowing one another throughout the progress of the play. This part of the theatre was strewn with rushes; in time it received the not inappropriate name of the *pit*. The stage itself was plainly furnished; there was little thought of decoration or of setting. There was always an elevated platform or balcony overlooking the stage at the rear; and upon this elevation were presented the frequent plays within plays, as in *Hamlet*. This

Interior Equipment.

[1] Derived from the Latin *curtina*, a little court; hence a local name.

platform also furnished the balcony scene in *Romeo and Juliet*, and served to suggest the walls of a city, as in *King John* and in the "histories." Gayly dressed and boisterous representatives of the court usually occupied stools upon the stage itself, where they displayed their finery, their fashions, and their manners, often to the great annoyance of audience and actors. Coarse-visaged, hoarse-voiced women sold oranges and apples to the mechanics and apprentices who crowded the pit. Tradesmen and gentlemen commoners filled the little pens which served for private boxes. Very few women were seen in this public audience; those of any reputation were closely masked. The gallants on the stage played cards and smoked, talked with one another, and insolently commented on actors and auditors alike. The performances were usually at three in the afternoon. A flag flying from the roof indicated that a play was on the stage. With a flourish of trumpets the customary Prologue was introduced, and then the action proceeded. Scarcely any scenery was employed. A card was hung announcing the scene in a wood, a castle, a field of battle, France, Bohemia, Paris, Venice, or London. Articles of common furnishing were utilized, and sometimes more elaborate efforts were made to give a realistic effect to the scene; but for the most part a frank appeal was made to the imagination of the spectators, and the liveliness of the imagination in the Elizabethan age seems to have been entirely adequate to all demands.[1] There are many who assert

[1] "Can this cockpit hold
The vasty fields of France? or may we cram
Within this wooden O the very casques
That did affright the air at Agincourt?
. . . . . .
Suppose within the girdle of these walls
Are now confin'd two mighty monarchies,

that this condition was favorable in every way, and that the performance grew vastly more impressive through the very absence of mechanical details, which possibly distract attention rather than emphasize the actor's art.

No attempt was made to reproduce the costumes historically suggestive of the character or scene; yet the actor's wardrobe was as luxurious and costly as that of the courtier himself. The women's parts were played by boys or men, who were often famous for their skill. If one would have the comment of the best possible authority on the methods of the Elizabethan stage, let him turn to the third act of *Hamlet* and follow carefully the instructions to the players. In many a comic scene, besides, has Shakespeare burlesqued the rude craft of some early player, as well as the general poverty of the stage in his time.

The Companies.

Professional actors were banded into companies distinguished by the title of some patron. There were the Lord Leicester's Players, the Queen's Players, the Lord Chamberlain's Men, etc. The service of the patron does not seem usually to have included much more than the securing of the royal license for the company, although the Queen's and the King's companies enjoyed some further privileges, and were honored with some special obligations in presenting their plays at court. A single company might be known by different names at various times. The Earl

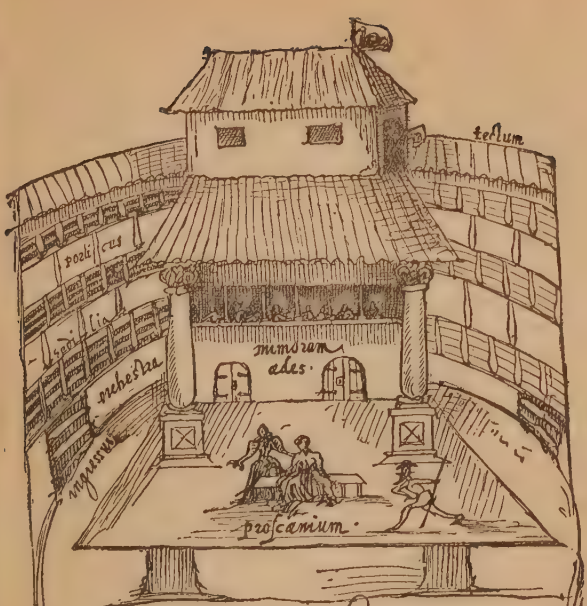
> Whose high upreared and abutting fronts
> The perilous narrow ocean parts asunder:
> Piece out our imperfections with your thoughts;
> Into a thousand parts divide one man,
> And make imaginary puissance;
> Think, when we talk of horses, that you see them
> Printing their proud hoofs i' the receiving earth;
> For 't is your thoughts that now must deck our kings," etc.
>
> Prologue to *King Henry V.*

of Leicester's Men became Lord Strange's in 1588. In 1592 Lord Strange became Earl of Derby, and the players changed their title accordingly. In 1594 the Earl of Derby died, and his company of actors became Lord Hunsdon's or the Lord Chamberlain's Men. In 1596 the earl died, and his son, the second Lord Hunsdon, became their patron; he also became Chamberlain in 1597. After the accession of James in 1603, this same company was honored with the title of King's Players. William Shakespeare was certainly a member of this company in 1594, and one of its foremost men in 1598. It is probable that he joined it on his first arrival in London. Richard Burbadge, greatest actor of his time, was Shakespeare's colleague and first interpreted his great tragic characters. William Kemp, the best comedian of his day, was a member of this same company. John Heming and Henry Condell were fellow actors with the poet, who collected Shakespeare's plays and edited the famous first folio text in 1623. This notable company first occupied The Theatre in Moorfields, and then the Rose, on Bankside; but it is the Globe Theatre with which they were especially identified, and of which Shakespeare himself was part owner.

Shakespeare's Predecessors.

Something of the development of the English drama has been outlined in the foregoing paragraphs; something remains to be said concerning the group of men who actually possessed the London stage at the moment of Shakespeare's entrance on professional life. Their influence on his career was not insignificant.

First in point of time came John Lyly. His distinction rests upon his romances and his pastoral comedies, which made him the most popular writer of his day. Lyly's earliest work appeared in 1579, when he



THE INTERIOR OF THE SWAN THEATRE AS SKETCHED BY JOHANNES DE WITT, A DUTCH SCHOLAR, ABOUT 1596

(At the rear of the stage, which is uncovered, is the tiring-room, to which the two large doors give entrance. Above the tiring-room extends a covered balcony, now occupied by spectators, but used by the actors, when required, in the presentation of a play. At the door of the chamber near the gallery roof stands a trumpeter to announce the beginning of an act. The flag, with the emblem of the swan, is flying, as a sign to those outside that a play is in progress. The disposition of boxes and galleries is plain, but unfortunately the "groundlings" are unrepresented in the picture. The form of the building is oval. No other drawing of the interior of an Elizabethan theatre is known to exist, says Dowden. The original sketch was discovered recently in the University Library, Utrecht.)

was a graduate student at Oxford. It was a novel, as novels then went, entitled *Euphues*. The story is very slight; it details the observations and reflections of a young Athenian who, in the second part of the narrative, visits England and expresses his opinions on society, friendship, love, philosophy, and religion. The peculiar feature of this work is its strange and ingenious literary style, a style so distinctive that the word *euphuistic* was coined to designate it. In Lyly's *euphuism*, alliteration played a conspicuous part; elaborately balanced antithesis was curiously studied out; the vocabulary was burdened with unusual and bombastic terms; the imagery was forced to an absurd extravagance and made much use of the fabulous material which may at one time have passed for natural science. The whole principle of this style was artificial: —

John Lyly, 1554-1606.

"There is no *p*rivilege that needeth a *p*ardon, neither is there any *re*mission to be *asked* where a *com*mission is to be *granted*. I speak this, gentlemen, not to excuse the *of*fence which was *taken* but to offer a *de*fence where I was *mistaken*."

"As by basil the scorpion is engendered, and by the means of the same herb destroyed . . . or as the salamander which being a long space nourished in the fire at last quencheth it."

These may be taken as fair illustrations of the eccentricities of euphuism; and yet Lyly's style became the fashion, not only in the literature of the day, but to some extent even in the sober speech of polite society. In spite of its oddities, Euphuism was not without wholesome effect upon the subsequent structure of our English prose, encouraging an attention and a care for style which had been in some degree neglected.

Following the success of *Euphues*, Lyly attached himself to the court and sought an appointment as Master of the Revels, but this hope was never gratified. The author of *Euphues*, however, wrote seven or eight court comedies, so-called, which were rather masques [1] than comedies, as we use the latter term. Their themes were usually the elaborate flattery of the queen; their material and their titles were taken from the classics. Six of Lyly's plays were first presented before Elizabeth herself by the children's companies then frequently employed. The more important of the comedies are: *Endimion*, *Midas*, *Sapho and Phao*, *Alexander and Campaspe*, *Galatea*. Into the current of his rather sluggish dramas Lyly tossed an occasional bit of lyric verse, which, more than anything else from his pen, appeals to the appreciation of the modern reader.[2]

The influence of John Lyly upon the early work of Shakespeare is considerable. *Love's Labour's Lost*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, and *As You Like It* contain many suggestions of this "Euphuist." While at times he satirizes the absurdities of euphuism, Shakespeare, like his contemporaries, drops easily into the same artificial style. A good example of his serious use of that peculiar diction is found in the Duke's speech in *As You Like It*, Act II., scene i.

Participating in the dramatic activity of this preparatory period were George Peele (1558–97), author of *The Arraignment of Paris*, *The Chronicle of Edward I.*, *The Love of King David and Fair Bethseba*, and *The Battle of Alcazar;* Robert Greene (1560–92), whose plays, *Alphonsus King of Arragon*, *Orlando Furioso*, *James IV.*, *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay*, and *George-*

Peele, Kyd, Greene, Nash, and Lodge.

[1] Page 147. [2] See the song *Cupid and My Campaspe Played.*

a-Greene, struck a note echoed in many a play of the greater dramatist; and Thomas Kyd (died 1594), author of *The Spanish Tragedy*. Of Kyd's personality we know little. Peele and Greene were typical bohemians of their craft and day, and the brevity of their career is significant of dissipation and reckless squandering of all their powers. Intimately associated with these writers were two others, Thomas Nash (1567–1600) and Thomas Lodge (died 1625). Nash and Lodge contributed little directly to the stage; their work is rather in the field of prose romance, in which they were pioneers with Lyly and also Greene. Lodge was the author of *Rosalynde*, the prototype of Shakespeare's heroine; Greene, writer of a dozen romances, supplied in *Pandosto* the material for *The Winter's Tale*. Nash was a realist, and wrote a novel called *The Unfortunate Traveller, or the Life of Jack Wilton* (1594). In his slight contributions to dramatic literature he employed the method of the satirist.

But by far the most interesting and most important of Shakespeare's predecessors was Marlowe, who was born at Canterbury, the son of a shoemaker. He received a university training at Cambridge, where he took his bachelor's degree in 1583. Of his early life we know less even than of Shakespeare's, but his first play, *Tamburlaine*, was acted in 1587 or 1588. Then followed *The Tragical History of Doctor Faustus*, *The Jew of Malta*, and *Edward II.*, three great plays which carried Marlowe to the forefront among this group of dramatists, profoundly impressing young Shakespeare's swiftly developing genius, and giving promise of achievements comparable to those of the great poet himself. The mere fact that in the *Jew of Malta*

Christopher Marlowe, 1564-93.

Shakespeare found a model for his creation of Shylock is less significant than the close resemblance in plan and structure between Marlowe's *Edward* and Shakespeare's *Richard II.* Indeed the former play may be regarded as having given the dramatic "history" its permanent form. In 1593, five years, perhaps, after the completion of his earliest play, Marlowe, twenty-nine years old, died a tragic and disgraceful death. Such was the end of not a few of the brilliant characters who wasted genius and life thus in the prodigal age of the great queen.

The spirit of Marlowe's dramatic work is a passionate thirst for power. His *dramatis personæ* — Marlowe himself — craved that

"Solely sovereign sway and masterdom"

which Shakespeare included as an object in the o'erreaching ambition of Macbeth. He is never to be ranked among the *minor* poets of his time. Marlowe's services to English dramatic art were of prime importance. He used blank verse superbly. It was no mere hyperbole of compliment that Ben Jonson uttered when he spoke of

"Marlowe's mighty line."

Bombast — ever a delight to the Elizabethan ear — is frequent enough in the speeches of Marlowe's characters; but even here there is an irresistible roll in the verse that speaks of an imagination and a strength destined for great things. In the drama of the Scythian shepherd-warrior Tamburlaine occurs this characteristic scene, which may illustrate the effectiveness of that "mighty line:" —

"*Tamburlaine.* Bring out my footstool.

[*Bajazeth is taken from the cage.*]

"*Bajazeth.* Ye holy priests of heavenly Mahomet,
That, sacrificing, slice and cut your flesh,
Staining his altars with your purple blood;
Make Heaven to frown and every fixed star
To suck up poison from the moorish fens,
And pour it in this glorious tyrant's throat!"

Elsewhere Tamburlaine himself discourses thus:—

"The world will strive with hosts of men-at-arms,
To swarm unto the ensign I support:
The host of Xerxes, which by fame is said
To have drank the mighty Parthian Araris,
Was but a handful to that we will have.
Our quivering lances, shaking in the air,
And bullets, like Jove's dreadful thunderbolts,
Enrolled in flames and fiery smouldering mists,
Shall threat the gods more than Cyclopian wars:
And with our sun-bright armour as we march,
We'll chase the stars from Heaven and dim their eyes
That stand and muse at our admired arms."

Suggestions for Study. For general study of the drama, the book of widest utility and of chief authority is A. A. Ward's *History of English Dramatic Literature* (Macmillan, 3 vols.). Also important is *Shakespeare's Predecessors in the English Drama*, by John Addington Symonds (Smith, Elder & Co.). With these should be mentioned *Plays of our Forefathers*, by Charles M. Gayley (Duffield), and *Elizabethan Drama*, 2 vols., by Felix Schelling (Houghton Mifflin Co.). *The English Religious Drama*, by Katharine Lee Bates (Macmillan), is condensed and can be used to advantage. *The English Miracle Plays*, by Alfred Pollard (Clarendon Press), contains good illustrations of the early drama. *Specimens of the Pre-Shakespearian Drama*, edited by J. M. Manly (Ginn), includes, in vol. i., specimens of the miracle plays and moralities, also *The Four P.'s*, by Heywood, and Bale's *Kynge Johan*. Vol. ii. contains *Ralph Roister Doister*, *Gammer Gurton's Needle*, *Cambises*, *Gorboduc*, and plays by Lyly, Greene, Peele, and Kyd. This work is especially valuable, and with it should be mentioned *The Best Elizabethan Plays*, edited by W. R. Thayer (Ginn), which gives the text of Marlowe's *Jew of Malta*, Jonson's *The Alchemist*,

Beaumont and Fletcher's *Philastre*, *The Two Noble Kinsmen* (in part attributed to Shakespeare), and Webster's *The Duchess of Malfi*. The careful reading of these texts is strongly urged upon teachers. An acquaintance with the plays is worth more than any amount of reference to books which describe or criticise them; and these collections are so easily available that there is no excuse for their being overlooked. The most important plays of the Elizabethan dramatists are published in the *Mermaid Series* (Scribner). The volume devoted to Marlowe contains all his plays, and has an excellent introduction by J. A. Symonds. Other volumes include the works of Massinger, Middleton, Beaumont, and Fletcher. The complete works of Marlowe have been edited by F. Cunningham (Chatto & Windus), also by A. H. Bullen (3 vols.), in *The English Dramatists' Series*. In the series of *English Readings*, published by Henry Holt & Co., are found Lyly's *Endymion*, edited, with a critical essay upon that writer, by G. P. Baker, and Marlowe's *Edward II.*, edited by E. T. McLaughlin.

Upon dramatic form and structure there is no more comprehensive study than Freytag's *Technique of the Drama*, translated by E. J. MacEwan (Scott, Foresman & Co.). *The Drama, its Law and Technique*, by Elizabeth Woodbridge (Allyn & Bacon), is a useful book; it is much briefer than Freytag's and embodies its principles.

For an account of the times, read *Shakespeare's England*, by Edwin Goadby (Cassell), *The Age of Elizabeth*, by M. Creighton (*Historical Epochs Series*, Scribner), chapter vii. in Green's *Short History of the English People*, and *Shakespeare the Boy*, by W. J. Rolfe (American Book Co.).

V. WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE (1564–1616) AND HIS SUCCESSORS.

While the last stages in this evolution of the English drama were passing partly within the brilliant circle of Elizabeth's court, partly amid the extravagant and often dissolute scenes of bohemian literary life in

London, there was developing at Stratford on Avon, a quiet village of Warwickshire, —

"That shire which we the heart of England well may call" [1]

— a youthful genius who should one day claim dominion over the English stage, to be recognized in time as the greatest among all the men of genius that this island kingdom was to bear. Of his life we know all too little; and yet we are as well acquainted with it as we are with Spenser's or with Chaucer's.

In Stratford.

William Shakespeare was the son of John and Mary (Arden) Shakespeare. Neither belonged to the educated class; but that during the poet's boyhood they enjoyed the respect of the community and were fairly prosperous is evident. John Shakespeare, according to custom, practiced two or three related trades: he is referred to as a glover, as a butcher, and as a dealer in wool and leather. In 1558 he was elected a member of the Stratford council; in 1559 he was appointed constable. In fact he held numerous offices and was regarded clearly as one qualified to have a considerable share in the oversight of town affairs. In 1568 he became bailiff, an official of great importance in the corporation; he was afterward made chief alderman. Later in life he fell into financial embarrassment and seems to have lost his standing as a man prominent in public service. On the 26th of April, 1564, his son, William, was baptized, and tradition has settled upon the 23d of April as the probable date of the poet's birth. There was a school of good academic grade at Stratford, the free grammar school, one of several that had been reëstablished on old foundations by Edward VI. Here Shakespeare received such educational training as the schoolroom could provide. Latin grammar and

[1] From the *Polyolbion* of Michael Drayton (1563–1631), author of *The Battle of Agincourt*.

literature must have formed the principal subject of his study, and it is entirely possible that the school offered instruction in both French and Italian. That Shakespeare enjoyed some acquaintance with these languages is certain. Ben Jonson's often quoted assertion that his fellow dramatist had "small Latin and less Greek" should be understood as the statement of a critic who was himself noted for classical scholarship, and certainly cannot be interpreted as affirming the poet's ignorance of either language. Conjecture has ascribed various employments to the son of John Shakespeare, and tradition has been busy with hints of youthful exploits and wilder escapades.

His home was in one of the richest and most beautiful shires of England, — a region of fallow field and romantic woodland, of winding stream and quiet country landscape. Footpaths crossed the meadows and ran between hedges fragrant with spring blossoms, melodious with the songs of linnet and thrush. Beyond the smoothly flowing Avon stretched the ancient forest of Arden to suggest the scenes that delight us in *Love's Labour's Lost*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and *As You Like It*. There were little hamlets scattered over the countryside; here and there were the extensive parks and imposing manor houses of the gentry. To the north, only the distance of a wholesome country walk, stood Warwick Castle. Kenilworth was but fifteen miles away, where the Earl of Leicester elaborately entertained the queen with masques and pageants on the occasion of a royal visit in 1575, when Shakespeare was eleven years old. Only a few miles beyond Kenilworth lay historic Coventry, at that time the third city in England, where miracle plays were performed as late as 1580, when Shakespeare was a boy of sixteen. Amid the memories and inspirations of these diverse scenes,

William Shakespeare grew into the possession of his poetic power.

In the fall of 1582 this youth was married to Anne Hathaway, daughter of a well-to-do farmer living in the neighboring hamlet of Shottery. The bride was eight years the senior of her husband. In the following year their daughter Susanna was born. Two other children, twins, Hamnet and Judith, were born early in 1585; and later in that year, or in the year following, Shakespeare left Stratford, to appear soon after in London, where for twenty years he seems to have made his home.

The Spirit of the Age.

When Shakespeare came to London — that was indeed the marking of an epoch in English letters. It was an auspicious time for the advent of this gifted youth. The exhilaration of a great enthusiasm was in the air. It was a period of extraordinary enterprise and the most daring achievements. A remarkable growth in national spirit was the distinguishing feature of Elizabeth's reign, and various natural causes contributed to this growth. The religious troubles, which arose in the time of Henry VIII. and reached their terrible climax in the reign of Mary, were now allayed, and a spirit of tolerance insured an era of religious liberty gratefully welcomed by the nation at large. A notable activity in all kinds of trade, and general prosperity, the result of a rapidly developing commerce, gave a new confidence to the kingdom caught in such desperate straits by the unfortunate policy of Mary. The spirit of expansion possessed the age, and admiration succeeded wonder at the deeds of Elizabeth's knights and admirals. In Shakespeare's boyhood Sir Francis Drake accomplished the circumnavigation of the globe.[1] While

[1] Read in Green's *Short History of the English People* the paragraph on "The Sea Dogs," ch. vii. § 6.

he was still in his teens, Englishmen were dreaming of conquest and colonies in the new world. He was already making his way in London when there occurred that momentous event which we call the defeat of the Great Armada, an event which not only filled all England with the joy of an unprecedented victory, but which banished for the time the chance of foreign interference in Church or State. As a result of these favoring conditions, the whole kingdom awoke to a sudden sense of its own greatness and power. Moreover, the hearts of the people were united in a warmth of passionate devotion to their queen, a devotion which seems to have thrown the idealism of a romantic chivalry over all the relations of subject and sovereign. Elizabeth's courtiers were extravagant in the expression of their worship. The Earl of Hatton declared that "to see her was Heaven; the lack of her was Hell." Sir Philip Sidney, the Earl of Essex, Raleigh, Walsingham, Lord Burleigh, the Earl of Leicester — all were leaders in the brilliant group of cavaliers who waited on the queen. Some of these men aspired to the most intimate relations with their sovereign; some were themselves distinguished by their contributions to the literature of the age, and were noted for their generous patronage of writers more gifted than themselves. Drake, Frobisher, Hawkins, Grenville, were among the most famous of the gallant sailors who helped to make their country feared on every sea. These men felt the spirit of the time, and each in his own way obeyed an impulse that was irresistible. There was a feverish exaltation, an exuberant extravagance in private as well as public enterprise. Young men scarce out of boyhood embarked on hazardous ventures. Vast fortunes were squandered as recklessly as they had been gathered. Men as well as women wore rich and striking

costumes. Novel luxuries found their way into use. Architecture improved, spacious halls and splendid mansions were erected. Forks were introduced, and table etiquette improved along with a more luxurious service. Great sums were expended in pageants and entertainments, to which the common citizens were often admitted. Men thought and spoke as they dressed and planned — lavishly. The highly elaborate and artificial diction affected by Lyly and Sidney was imitated and exaggerated by the court; it too was significant of the time. In this epoch the imagination ruled. Sidney, Spenser, Marlowe, and Shakespeare were as truly types of the age in literature as were the men of daring and brilliant action already named. In the light of such conditions we may appreciate the language of the French historian Taine, when, in introducing his chapter on Shakespeare, he declares that this great age alone could have cradled such a child.

This was the character of the time when Shakespeare came to London. *The Shepherds' Calendar* had been written at Penshurst, where Sidney had framed the passionate sonnets comprised in *Astrophel and Stella*, and Spenser was now in Ireland busy in his leisure over the first three books of *The Faerie Queene*. Francis Bacon, recently admitted to the bar, was pursuing his unhappy career in search of preferment at court, and accepting favors from the young Earl of Essex, then prime favorite with the queen. Ben Jonson was attending Westminster School, a lad of twelve. The comedies of Lyly were in fashion with the court. Peele and Greene were in their prime, and Marlowe was at work on *Tamburlaine*, his first success.

There is no exact record of Shakespeare's first experiences at the capital. In some manner he found employment at one of the two playhouses then open,

Elizabeth R

probably in some subordinate position such as caretaker or servant for the benefit of patrons. Then he became a member of the company, and in the adaptation of old plays he doubtless began his apprenticeship as a writer for the stage. In time, as his ability was recognized, he was set at more ambitious tasks, and, first in collaboration with established playwrights, then in the full freedom of his own exuberant fancy, he began to produce his works. Of Shakespeare's success as an actor few notes have been preserved. He is described by one contemporary as "excellent in the quality he professes." [1] Another says that he was "a handsome, well-shaped man," and an old actor, William Beeston, asserted that he "did act exceeding well." We know that Shakespeare appeared in two of Ben Jonson's plays, *Every Man in his Humor* and *Sejanus;* also that he played the part of Adam in *As You Like It* and the Ghost in *Hamlet;* by one writer [2] this last rôle was referred to as "the top of his performance." That he played principal parts in all his own dramas is affirmed in the first collected edition (1623) of his works.

In London.

Shakespeare's hand is felt in *Titus Andronicus* and in the *First Part of King Henry VI.* Concerning the former there is a tradition that some dramatist, now unidentified, brought the play to Shakespeare's company, and that it was turned over to the poet for revision. The "history" may have been written by Marlowe and Shakespeare in conjunction. About 1590 the young dramatist began original work. The result of the next five years included *Love's Labour's Lost*, *Comedy of Errors*, *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*,

His First Period.

[1] Henry Chettle, publisher of Greene's *Pamphlet*, 1592.

[2] Nicholas Rowe.

Romeo and Juliet, the *Second* and *Third Parts of King Henry VI.*, *Richard III.*, *Richard II.*, and *King John*. Because of their preponderance, this is often called the period of the early comedies and histories. As it represents the experimental stage of Shakespeare's activity, Mr. Dowden describes it by the phrase "In the Workshop." That the poet's power was recognized is evident from an interesting note of the time which also indicates that his success was sufficiently marked to rouse the jealousy of some older men. In 1592 appeared a little book entitled *A Groatsworth of Wit*, the last utterance of the popular and profligate playwright, Robert Greene, who died in beggary just before the publication of his pamphlet. In a spirit of bitterness Greene remonstrates against the habits of new writers, accusing them of making too free with the material of his own plays and the productions of his friends, Marlowe and Peele. One sentence of his indictment addressed to the writers named gains importance because of its reference to Shakespeare: —

"Yes, trust them not," he says, "for there is an upstart Crow beautified with our feathers, that with his *Tygers heart wrapped in a players hide*, supposes he is as well able to bumbast out a blanke verse as the best of you: and being an absolute *Johannes Factotum* is, in his owne conceit, the only Shake-scene in the countrie."

In the *Third Part of King Henry VI.* occurs the line,

"Oh Tiger's heart wrapt in a woman's hide,"

and the allusion in Greene's attack suggests that possibly he, at least in part, was author of the original plays which Shakespeare recast finally in the *Second* and *Third Parts of King Henry VI.* But the charge made by Greene is of importance mainly as being the

earliest known allusion to the poet in print, and as throwing light upon the nature of his labors and their success. In a publication only three months later, Chettle apologizes for this reference, and warmly approves the dramatist and his art. The dedication of the two poems, *Venus and Adonis* and *The Rape of Lucrece* (1593, 1594), is ample proof of Shakespeare's recognition by those who patronized the arts.

Second Period.

Between 1595 and 1601 Shakespeare wrote *The Merchant of Venice*, the two parts of *King Henry IV.*, *King Henry V.*, *Merry Wives of Windsor*, *Taming of the Shrew*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, *As You Like It*, *Twelfth Night*. This is the period of the later comedies — what Dowden denominates "In the World." Here we fall immediately under the spell of Shakespeare's perfect art. Never have sentiment and romance, pathos and humor, mingled so exquisitely as in these beautiful creations of rich poetic fancy and dramatic power. Five at least of the plays are masterpieces. Elizabeth is said to have been so taken with the character of Falstaff in *King Henry IV.* that she bade the author show that personage in love; and tradition ascribes the creation of the *Merry Wives* to this command. Evidences of the poet's prosperity are not wanting. In 1597 John Shakespeare was allowed the grant of a coat of arms; thereafter the title "Gentleman" appears following any legal mention of Shakespeare's name. In that same year the playwright purchased New Place in Stratford, the home he occupied after his retirement from the stage. This was the first of a series of investments which imply a thrifty disposition as well as financial success. In 1597 also begins the publication of Shakespeare's plays. Sixteen of these were printed during the author's lifetime, and these were published

without his authority or supervision. His revenue came from the theatre for which he wrote, and it was for his pecuniary interest that his productions should remain the exclusive property of the company to which he belonged. There was then no privilege of copyright and no protection for an author if his work was stolen or published in imperfect form. But in the case of Shakespeare, the publication of the plays, beginning with *Richard II.*, *Richard III.*, and *Romeo and Juliet*, in 1597, seems to indicate the rising fame of the dramatist, and the desire of readers to become acquainted with his works. The plays thus printed singly, previous to 1623, are distinguished by their form as the *quarto texts*.

In 1598 Francis Meres, in his book *Palladis Tamia* (*The Wit's Treasury*), enumerates the titles of twelve plays which in his opinion prove the English dramatist comparable to Plautus and Seneca among the Latins. This mention of the poet's work is exceedingly valuable in helping to fix the chronology of the plays. The famous Globe Theatre was built in 1599, and from the first Shakespeare appears to have owned a large share in the property; there is a tradition that the young Earl of Southampton had once made the dramatist a gift of £1000, which may have helped him to this investment. Such generosity from a patron of art is by no means incredible or unlikely. The Earl of Essex had bestowed on Francis Bacon a much larger gift.

Now follows a distinct epoch in the dramatist's career. It is the period of his great tragedies, the masterpieces of the English stage. Within the first six or seven years of the new century were produced, in rapid succession, *Julius Cæsar*, *Hamlet*, *Othello*, *Lear*, *Macbeth*; also two serious comedies, *All's Well that Ends Well* and *Measure*

Third Period.

for Measure, together with one "history," *Troilus and Cressida*. It may be that in this extraordinary grouping of material turbulent with passion, heavy with the gloom of human tragedy, the pathos and catastrophe of life, we should see only the marvelous creations of a philosopher whose imagination laid closer hold on the motives and emotions of man than that of any other dreamer or seer that we have ever known, and that the tone of these dramas is not to be regarded as especially significant of the poet's own mental attitude during this time. But such imaginings can hardly come from even the most profound of human minds until it has been harrowed by some stern experience. In *Measure for Measure* the Duke thus reasons with life: —

> "If I do lose thee, I do lose a thing
> That none but fools would keep," [1]

— a sentiment in harmony with the desperate philosophy of Macbeth: —

> "It is a tale
> Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,
> Signifying nothing." [2]

To this period of tragic mood has Dowden, not inappropriately, applied the motto "Out of the Depths."

Whatever may have directly inspired these intense studies of the sadder phases in life's drama, there certainly was no falling off in the financial prosperity of Shakespeare, for large investments were made in 1602 and 1605. Professionally, the company of which he was a member passed under the patronage of James I., and when that monarch made his royal entry into London, March 15, 1604, Shakespeare was one of the nine actors composing the band of King's Players who walked in the procession from the Tower to Westminster. And not long after this event he seems to

[1] Act III. scene i. 5. [2] Act V. scene v. 26.

have left the stage of the theatre, although he continued to reside in London, and followed his calling as a playwright for several years.

The last group of dramas from Shakespeare's hand belongs to the period between 1607 and 1612. It comprises two Roman "histories," *Antony and Cleopatra* and *Coriolanus*. *Timon of Athens* and *Pericles* represent the work of another dramatist, Shakespeare apparently having given only final touches to these plays. The finest compositions in this last group are the romantic dramas *Cymbeline*, *The Tempest*, and *The Winter's Tale*. The spirit of these romances is calm and joyous; the stress of unjust suspicion and cruel harshness is softened into reconciliation and atonement. The action lies wholly in the pleasant dreamland of a poet's imagination, and the happiness of childhood and youth reigns care-free in each conclusion. The pageant of *King Henry VIII.*, but slightly touched by the great dramatist, may be included as containing traces of Shakespeare's workmanship, the last dramatic labor of the poet so far as known.

Fourth Period.

Shakespeare's *Sonnets*, which had been accumulating for ten years or more, were published without the author's sanction in 1609. The story which they seem to tell has caused much discussion, and various unsatisfactory attempts have been made to interpret them. If they contain anything more substantial than the fiction of fancy, it is unlikely that they will ever be reduced to the details of fact.

The Sonnets.

"With this key
Shakespeare unlocked his heart,"

says Wordsworth.

"Did Shakespeare? If so, the less Shakespeare he!"

comments Browning.[1]

[1] Wordsworth, *Scorn not the Sonnet;* Browning, *House.*

Last Years.

It must not be supposed that during Shakespeare's brilliant course in London his heart had been entirely weaned from his family and home in Stratford. There are traditions of visits more or less regularly paid; and at the age of forty-five or six, the poet turned his back upon the excitements and contentions, the rivalries and triumphs of city life, apparently longing for the quiet retirement of his native town. An occasional trip to London to renew professional associations there might serve to break the monotony of village calm, while now and then old comrades dropped in upon his leisure at New Place. Thus in prosperous ease the poet lived at Stratford until the year 1616. His earliest biographer, Nicholas Rowe, upon the authority of John Ward, parish minister, says that in the spring of that year Shakespeare was unwell; that he left his bed unwisely to join in the convivial entertainment of guests from London, of whom one was Ben Jonson; that a fever followed the merry-making, and that on the anniversary of his birth, April 23, he died.

Shakespeare's Place.

In our appreciation of Shakespeare's genius, we should be careful to maintain a reasonable attitude toward the great poet-dramatist of our literature. The impressiveness of these tremendous dramas combines with the traditions of three centuries of praise to exalt this man so high as to remove him utterly from the level of common men. Yet Shakespeare possessed no superhuman gifts. Such an attitude of extravagant sentiment is as unworthy of its object as is that of indifference or ignorance. In all particulars Shakespeare was emphatically human, — in endowments, in development, in responsiveness to the spirit of his age, in his business instincts, his professional ambitions, his personal conduct, especially

in broad, frank sympathy with his fellow men. Nor did the master enter into the rich heritage of his genius until he had fulfilled the conditions to which genius itself is subject; Shakespeare, even, must learn his art.

Upon the superficial faults in Shakespeare's style we do not need to pause: his inconsistent grammar, his obscurities of phrase, the errors in statement of fact, the anachronisms, the over-readiness to word-play, the hyperbole, the gross exaggeration, the bombast. Some of these faults were modified with maturity; some of them were the common faults of the age and shared by his contemporaries. His art was greater than these and is not affected by such casual defects.

The Art of Shakespeare.

Shakespeare was not a constructor of plots — he borrowed. The historical plays are drawn from Holinshed and Hall, or from Plutarch's *Lives*. The sources of *King Lear*, *Macbeth*, and *Cymbeline* are also in the chronicles. Most of the comedies, and several of the tragedies, are mere dramatizations of English and Italian romances. The *Comedy of Errors* owes its material to Plautus; the *Midsummer Night's Dream* makes free use of Ovid. Two plays, *Love's Labour's Lost* and *The Tempest*, have not yet been traced to any known original, although there are internal evidences that the stories of these also are from French or Italian romance. One play alone, *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, seems to have a plot wholly original with Shakespeare. Yet this statement reflects in no wise upon the integrity or even the originality of the poet's work; rather it exalts his power in having been able thus to impart such extraordinary strength and life-likeness to characters devoid of these qualities in the hands of their first creators. In that field of composition which we call *invention*, Shakespeare was

His Plots.

weak. Not only are his plots thus borrowed, but the incidents which contribute to the action of the plays are often trivial, obviously artificial, and frequently inadequate to serve as parts in the machinery of some great drama. The dramatic structure of the earlier plays is loose. Scene is carelessly added to scene, and there is not infrequently a lack of real organic unity and growth; but after the poet reached the second period of his experience, this prime defect is overcome. He learned to be a master of dramatic technique.

His Characters.

In the interpretation of human motives and passions, in the characterization of his *dramatis personæ*, Shakespeare is transcendent. He projects these men and woman absolutely outside his own personality. How perfectly individualized they are: Shylock and Iago, Harry Percy and Harry Monmouth, Portia of Belmont and Portia of Rome, Sir John Falstaff and Sir Toby Belch, Launce and Launcelot, the Fool in *Twelfth Night* and the Fool in *Lear*, Ophelia, Juliet, Desdemona, Perdita, and Rosalind; what variety in character and in motive for action. The proud integrity of Brutus is beguiled by the wily politician Cassius; Othello's jealousy is inflamed by the villainous Iago; on the other hand, Macbeth, possessed by his wicked ambition, is hurried headlong through crime to his own disaster, while Lear, innocent of guilt, is betrayed by his own willful folly. Hamlet falls a victim of circumstances and because of his inability to grapple with "outrageous fortune." Shakespeare's power in objective creation is without approach in literature. Two hundred and forty-six distinctly marked personalities have been counted in these plays, omitting those of doubtful authorship and those written in collaboration with others.[1] Shakespeare's por-

[1] C. F. Johnson, *Essentials of Literary Criticism.*

traitures are not untrue to life. His world is the world of romance, to be sure, rather than the world of realistic commonplace; and in these representations of emotion, of passion, of guilt, remorse, despair, or of affection, devotion, sacrifice, repentance, reconciliation, there is an intensity of force, a crowding of details into moments, that naturally suggest an artificial rather than a realistic handling; but this concentration of effect is incidental to the necessities of the stage, and indeed of all literary art, and includes a larger expression of the truth than mere photographic transcripts of the more leisurely passages in ordinary life.

We are to look upon Shakespeare as more than a playwright. In spirit as in form of expression he is a poet of the highest rank. The songs which are so richly strewn upon the dialogue of his scenes are lyrics of the finest order; but in the perfect imagery of his comparisons, the exquisite pictures of natural beauty, the superb sweep of his splendid verse, his poetic power is as masterful as it is lavishly bestowed. In his view of life and his interpretation of the thoughts and actions of men, Shakespeare proves his right to a place among the sanest and wisest of philosophers. He reads men sympathetically and justly.

Poet and Philosopher.

> "The web of our life is of a mingled yarn, good and ill together: our virtues would be proud, if our faults whipped them not; and our crimes would despair if they were not cherished by our virtues,"

says one of the poet's moralizing counselors;[1] and it is this recognition of mingled good and ill in human life and conduct, his perfect freedom from cant or prejudice, as well as the uncompromising soundness of his

[1] First Lord in *All's Well that Ends Well*, Act IV. scene iii. 67.

moral judgment in the treatment of evil, that has made the great dramatist one of the great teachers of the world.

"Dost thou think because thou art virtuous there shall be no more cakes and ale?" demands that indignant scapegrace, Sir Toby Belch, of the fanatical Malvolio;[1] and we admit that Sir Toby is within the law: but our consciences applaud that profounder sentiment, the ripened fruit of Shakespeare's maturer mind, to which he gives expression in *The Tempest*, subtlest of all his plays. Here Ariel, addressing the three men of sin, declares: —

> "The powers, delaying, not forgetting, have
> Incensed the seas and shores, yea, all the creatures
> Against your peace. . . .
> . . . . . .
> Whose wraths to guard you from, —
> Which here in this most desolate isle, else falls
> Upon your heads, — is nothing, but heart-sorrow
> And a clear life ensuing."[2]

Finally, it is fair to ask, did Shakespeare have a conscious moral purpose in the creation of his dramas?

His Purpose.

Such a theory is not sustained by a study of the plays. That a definite moral effect should be felt in these impressive compositions is inevitable. The true artist dominates his work however objectively he may write; he is still within as well as without the characters he creates. His ideals will not be wholly hidden; and as he rouses sympathy with this success or with that defeat, so will he indicate the direction in which his judgment falls. One thing is sure: there is no allegory in Shakespeare's plays. His creatures are neither caricatures nor types; they are as truly real as though they were flesh and blood. Romeo, Othello, Hotspur, Hamlet, are not types pre-

[1] *Twelfth Night*, Act II. scene iii. 105. [2] Act III. scene iii.

senting passion of love, jealousy, rashness, indecision; they are *men*, — men who are recognized as governed strongly by these qualities, yet moving with all the freedom and uncertainty of men. The great dramatist has himself avowed his only conscious purpose in that often quoted comment upon the ethics of his craft: —

"The purpose of playing, whose end, both at the first and now, was and is, to hold, as 't were, the mirror up to Nature, to show virtue her own feature, scorn her own image, and the very age and body of the time his form and pressure." [1]

This we may assume upon the authority of Shakespeare himself to have been the ideal of his art.

Next to Shakespeare's name, that of Ben Jonson is best known in the list of those who were associated with the theatre in the time of Elizabeth and James. Of all the dramatists continuing after Shakespeare's death, he was the greatest. Jonson was born in London about 1573. His father was a clergyman; but he had been a month dead when his son was born, and his mother marrying again, the boy had for stepfather a master bricklayer, who may have compelled him to learn that trade. He was educated, however, in Westminster School, and then for a brief term at Cambridge. During his youth he had also enlisted as a soldier, and had been with the army in the Netherlands. But Ben Jonson was naturally a scholar, and soon betook himself to writing for the stage. His name is mentioned by Frances Meres [2] in 1598 as one of "our best for Tragedie." Much of his early work was done in collaboration with others. In 1598 he produced an excellent comedy, *Every Man in his Humour*, a play which Shakespeare is said to have secured for his own company, and in the presentation

Ben Jonson, 1573?–1637.

[1] *Hamlet*, Act III. scene ii.

[2] See page 75.

of which he certainly acted a part. In 1599 there followed a companion piece in *Every Man out of his Humour;* the word *humour* in these titles being used in the sense of caprice, vagary, or hobby. Jonson wrote many masques for presentation at court. The masque was a form of drama elaborately arranged for spectacular effect; the subjects were usually mythological or took the form of allegory; the success of the masque was aided by beautiful costumes and ingenious mechanical effects. In this form of composition Milton, too, employed his art (see page 184). Jonson was the author of two tragedies, *Sejanus* (1603) and *Catiline* (1611); these dramas are characterized by an abundance of classical learning, but are cold and heavy. His most important comedies are *Volpone, or the Fox* (1605), *Epicœne, or the Silent Woman* (1609), and *The Alchemist* (1610); of which the last-named is regarded as a masterpiece. This play is remarkable for its very clever plot, and for the technical skill displayed in unfolding the details of the intrigue; it is also a good example of Jonson's learning, for it is fairly crammed with the lore of alchemy, and of roguery as well.

Jonson and Shakespeare.

The relations existing between Jonson and Shakespeare are of particular interest. Although Jonson was indebted to Shakespeare, if tradition be true, for his introduction to the stage, he represented a different school of writing and a different dramatic ideal. Morever, it is stated that he was jealous of the other's superior success, and that the two poets quarreled. Probably too much has been made of this latter statement, although of Jonson's irascible temper and quickness to take offense there is no doubt. But Jonson was a classical scholar, and was devoted to the models of the ancient stage; he there-

fore criticised the extravagance and license of dramatists like Marlowe and Shakespeare, whose methods he regarded as antagonistic to the highest art. That there was, save in this regard, genuine and hearty sympathy between these two gifted men need not be doubted, nor that each was appreciative of the other's peculiar gifts.

Thomas Fuller, who was born in 1608, and was well acquainted in his day with some who had been comrades with these noted characters and had survived them, declares as follows: —

"Many were the wit-combats betwixt him [Shakespeare] and Ben Jonson; which two I beheld like a Spanish great galleon and an English man-of-war. Master Jonson, like the former, was built higher in learning; solid, but slow in his performances; Shakespeare, with the English man-of-war, lesser in bulk, but lighter in sailing, could turn with all tides, tack about, and take advantage of all winds, by the quickness of his wit and invention." [1]

To the first folio edition of Shakespeare's plays, Ben Jonson contributed a poetical dedication of the book, which has furnished us with some of our most apt expressions of appreciation concerning our great poet: —

"Soul of the age!
The applause! delight! the wonder of our stage!"

"He was not of an age, but for all time!"

"Sweet Swan of Avon! what a sight it were
To see thee in our waters yet appeare,
And make those flights upon the bankes of Thames
That so did take Eliza and our James!"

In a little volume of prose, to which he gave the fanciful name of *Timber; or Discoveries Made upon Men and Matter*, Jonson gathered an interesting collection of paragraphs on various topics: bits of wisdom, epigrams, curious facts, criticism, brief essays,

[1] *Worthies of Warwickshire.*

not unworthily compared to similar examples in Ba con's works; and there is one paragraph of commen on the hasty composition of Shakespeare which close with this tribute: —

"I loved the man and honor his memory, on this sid idolatry, as much as any. He was indeed honest, and of a open and free nature; had an excellent phantasy, brave no tions, and gentle expressions."

Ben Jonson was the first officially appointed poet laureate, although the title had been, by way of com pliment, conferred upon several earlier poets. Fo some years he enjoyed prosperity, the poet-dramatist o the court, literary lion and dictator among the lesse writers, with whom the poet was extremely popular Later he fell into misfortune; he became involved i debt, paralysis attacked him, and in 1637 he died i poverty. He was buried in Westminster Abbey, an through the charity of a stranger it is said, a work man was hired to cut the simple but suggestive epitaph which identifies his grave: "O Rare Ben Jonson."

Beaumont and Fletcher.

Of the dramatists contemporary with Shakespeare and Ben Jonson, Francis Beaumont (1584–1616) and John Fletcher (1579–1625) are famous for their literary partnership of long standing. Beaumont seems to have been intimate with Jonson, and Dryden declares that the latter regularly took his own compositions to Beaumont for criticism. To Beaumont and Fletcher is ascribed the joint author ship of more than fifty plays; although it is now cer tain that the larger number were the work of Fletcher alone or in collaboration with other dramatists. It is known that Fletcher worked with Shakespeare upon the *King Henry VIII.* and, in all probability, upon *The Two Noble Kinsmen*, which is sometimes included as a doubtful play, with Shakespeare's works.

George Chapman (1559?–1634), John Webster, Thomas Middleton (1570?–1627), Thomas Dekker (1570–?), Thomas Heywood (1580?–1650?), Philip Massinger (1584–1640), John Ford (1586–1642?), John Marston (1575–1634), and James Shirley (1596–1666) were all employed with greater or less success in contributing to the distinction of the English stage in the closing years of Elizabeth and during the reign of James. These men were contemporaries, comrades and rivals, professionally, with the great leaders of their craft. Some of them were university men; most of them were strong intellectually and in artistic power; but the over-topping genius of Shakespeare is never so conspicuous as when his works are placed in contrast with theirs.

Lesser Dramatists.

After Shakespeare's time there followed a perceptible decline in the drama. Not only was there a loss of power among writers for the stage, but the growing spirit of the Puritan movement looked with less and less tolerance upon the increasing license of the theatre. The more sober-minded had never favored it, and regarded this form of amusement with hostility. As the drama decayed, the stage fell into disrepute, and at the outbreak of civil war the theatres were closed altogether.

Decline of the Stage.

In order to appreciate the real performance of Shakespeare and his influence upon the English stage, it would be best for the student to read one or more of the pre-Shakespearian plays before beginning a study of the dramatist's own work. All study of the plays should be chronological. (The general subject of the chronology of the Shakespearian dramas is discussed in Dowden's valuable *Shakespeare Primer*.) One might well begin with a play of the first group, *Love's Labour's Lost*. *A Midsummer Night's Dream* may very well be studied in close connection with this comedy, and comparisons made between the two.

Suggestions for Study.

I. Love's Labour's Lost. Sidney Lee, in his *Life of Shakespeare*, has noted many facts of interest concerning the names of the characters introduced. The story of this early play is slight, and no grave problems are involved. The sub-title, "a pleasant conceited comedy," adequately describes it. The situation and ensuing complications suggest comparison with the story of *The Princess*, by Tennyson. We should note how closely in this play the dramatist observes the ancient rule of "the unities"; and if there is any doubt as to the significance of that rule, enjoined by Aristotle, it should be carefully studied. Very shortly Shakespeare broke away from this rule entirely, returning to it in *The Tempest* alone of all his maturer plays. A feature peculiar to this early group of dramas is the preponderance of rhyme. If one counts the rhymes in *Love's Labour's Lost*, he will find that there are, in the dialogue of the play, twice as many rhyming verses as verses without rhyme. As the poet advanced in his work of composition, he gradually discarded this form of verse. An interesting comparison may be made in this respect with some late play, noting the gain in strength and beauty due to the change. Attention should be given to the diction. The extravagant use of word-play is objectionable. Lines like these are noticeable: "And then *grace* us in the dis*grace* of death." "Your oath is *pass*'d to *pass* away from these." "Of his Al*mighty* dreadful little *might*." "Do meet, as at a *fair*, in her *fair* cheek." Such examples may be noted.

There is some satire involved in the humor of the comedy. The character of Don Armado, the fantastical Spaniard, is intended to present in some degree the grotesque style of the euphuists in the extravagance of his comparisons, the strange figures used by him, the overwhelming frequency of alliteration and antithesis in his language; for illustration, turn to Don Armado's speech at the end of Act I., and to the letter read by Boyet in Act IV. scene i. A similar style of diction, hardly less grotesque, is found, however, in several of the speeches addressed by the King and his companions. Indicate some of the passages in which Shakespeare makes serious use

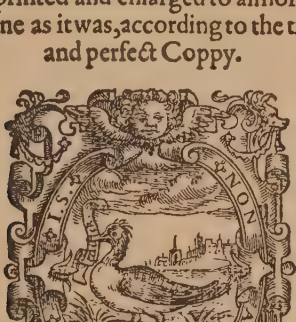
THE TRAGEDY OF HAMLET

Prince of Denmarke.

BY

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE.

Newly imprinted and enlarged to almoſt as much
againe as it was, according to the true
and perfect Coppy.



AT LONDON,
Printed for *Iohn Smethwicke* and are to be ſold at his ſhoppe
in Saint *Dunſtons* Church yeard in Fleetſtreet.
Vnder the Diall. 1611.

FACSIMILE OF TITLE-PAGE TO THE FOURTH EDITION OF HAMLET IN THE QUARTO TEXTS (1611)

(Reproduced from the original copy in the Boston Public Library.)

of euphuistic language. In studying these superficial qualities of the play, its many beauties of expression, the charming pictures of landscape and country scenery, the quality of the songs and other lyric passages should not be overlooked. Perhaps there are reminiscences here of Shakespeare's youth, which was not very far behind him, when he wrote of

> ". . . daisies pied and violets blue
> And lady smocks all silver white."

What opportunity did the poet have, as a boy, to cultivate a taste for nature, and to gain intimate acquaintance with nature's ways?

In spite of the obvious unreality of the King's vow and subsequent developments, there is perceptible charm in the unfolding of this simple plot. Its freshness and vivacity are very taking. The sentiment never grows serious, although there are some conspicuous passages in the manner that later we call Shakespearian. This we find in the reply of the Princess to Boyet's labored compliment (II. i. 13): —

> "Good Lord Boyet, my beauty, though but mean,
> Needs not the painted flourish of your praise,"

and also in the words of Biron, following the announcement of the death of the King of France (V. ii. 743): —

> "Honest plain words best pierce the ear of grief."

This is preëminently a comedy of *wit*. As illustrating the finer play of repartee, study the scene which contains the encounter of the Princess and her ladies with the gentlemen of the King's court (V. ii. 80–266). Compare with the spirit of this the coarser humor in the scenes which introduce the low-comedy characters of the sub-plot.

Of the characters in this play, only two, Biron (pronounced Be-roon′) and Rosaline, contain much promise of richness and power of imagination. It would be interesting to examine carefully the passages which make these personages preëminent, and to determine what artistic value Biron and Rosaline possess. Notice the careful *parallelism* followed in the speeches of these and the other characters; the pairing-off

of courtiers and ladies: is this a *natural* or an *artificial* adjustment of things? Do you find such an orderliness in other of the early plays, — in the later ones, the tragedies, for example?

It will hardly be worth while to spend much time in examining the technique of this slight drama. It is put together loosely, and its only purpose is to supply a series of amusing incidents that appeal to eye and ear. The comic episodes introducing the Schoolmaster, the Curate, the Spaniard, the Fool, and the Boy (all typical characters of the older stage), and their attempt to present the *interlude* of the *Nine Worthies*, are very likely an inspiration, if not an actual reminiscence, of what Shakespeare had seen, about his home, in the efforts of village art.

As representative comedies of the second period, we may take the *Merchant of Venice* and *As You Like It*. If there be opportunity for further study, the *First Part of King Henry IV.* and *Twelfth Night* should be added.

II. The Merchant of Venice. Here we find the dramatist in much more serious mood. A reading of the play will reveal his growing maturity of mind and his possession of far greater power. As a beginning of the study, separate the two stories of *the pound of flesh* and *the three caskets;* note the distinct separation of locality and setting in each. Now see how the two stories are bound together in the common plot: what are the links connecting them? What is to be said of the elopement of Lorenzo and Jessica as a dramatic incident in this comedy?

The opening scene of the drama is felt to be significant in suggesting the tone of the action that follows: explain this somewhat. What do you consider the dramatic value of the fifth act? Is it superfluous, or has it some artistic use? Where is the point of climax in the story of Bassanio's fortunes? Where the point of most intense interest in the misfortunes of Antonio? Where occurs the first suggestion of Antonio's losses? Point out the successive confirmations up to the moment of assurance. Where are we informed — and under what circumstances — that the argosies are safe?

Is there any way to account for the false rumors of their loss?

Who is the *hero* of this drama? Which character interests you most? Make a special study of "Old Shylock." What motives for his persecution of Antonio do you find in his own words (I. iii. and III. i.), — in Antonio's words (III. iii.)? What are his relations to the Christians, — to his household, — to his nation? Do you find any justification for the Jew in his hatred, — or grounds for sympathy with him in his defeat? How do you regard the conclusion of the trial-scene, — is it just? Study the personality of Portia. What are the prominent traits in her character? What do you think of her interpretation of the law, — of her plea for mercy? Is Portia maidenly? Does she obey the spirit of her father's will? Was there any reasonableness in such a will? Describe Antonio; Bassanio; Launcelot Gobbo. Cite some descriptive passages which especially please you. Do you find material for quotation here? Is there any more of *realism* in this play than in *Love's Labour's Lost*? Wherein do the essential differences lie? What makes this play, so serious in motive, a *comedy*?

III. As You Like It. Here again we have an interweaving of two stories in the creation of a double plot, an arrangement attractive to Shakespeare. Frederick's jealousy and banishment of Rosalind is paralleled in Oliver's ill treatment of Orlando. The love of Orlando and Rosalind is the motive which unites the threads and gives unity to the plot as a whole. As in *Love's Labour's Lost*, there is a comic sub-plot in the wooing of Audrey by William and Touchstone, duplicated in the courtship of Phœbe by Silvius. Study the grouping of all these characters, and follow their relations throughout the action. Compare the personalities of Rosalind and Portia; Orlando and Bassanio; Touchstone and Launcelot Gobbo. The character of Biron is sometimes taken as the prototype of Jaques; Rosaline is also compared with Rosalind: what resemblance do you see?

Compare the three scenes in the first act in *As You Like It* with the corresponding scenes in *The Merchant of Venice*.

Study the dramatic structure of these scenes: note those sections which merely explain the situation: the lines which indicate the beginning and progress of the action, — for example, the quarrel between Orlando and Oliver, and the suggestions which lead to the wrestling-match; also the points in Bassanio's narrative that occasion Antonio's resolve. What similarity do you observe in Shakespeare's introduction of these two heroines? Follow the details of the action which brings Rosalind and Orlando together. What resemblance is there between Rosalind's fortunes and those of Orlando? What passages in the first act of each play are devoted to characterization? Notice the contrast in the tone of these two plays as suggested by these opening acts; and the couplets which complete the act in both.

Do you see any significance in the localization of Arden and Belmont? It is impossible to find their counterparts on any map; each is a place of retreat from the confused world of strife in which these people are first discovered, and where their fortunes become complicated and intolerable. In Belmont is arranged the plan by which Antonio's predicament is resolved; Portia's gardens are associated with music, moonlight, and the peaceful happiness of love. Arden, the home of shepherds, is an asylum for the exiles, a rendezvous for those who are in trouble; here their fortunes are bettered and their wrongs righted. Such retreats are often found in the Elizabethan romance, of which Lodge's *Rosalind* is a type. This pretty romance, from which Shakespeare took the story of his comedy, should be read in connection with the play; it is found entire in some of the editions of the drama, and may be had for ten cents in *Cassell's National Library*. Again take note of such passages as particularly impress with their beauty. Commit to memory the speech of the Duke (II. i. 1–16) and Jaques's famous allegory, "All the world 's a stage" (II. vii. 139).

IV. Julius Cæsar. In reading this play, the student should, if possible, compare the lives of Cæsar, Brutus, and Mark Antony as given by Plutarch, using a copy of North's translation, which was the version used by Shakespeare as

the source of his material. He will be surprised at the poet's close adherence to the text of Plutarch.

The opening scene should be examined with reference to its indications of what is to follow, as well as of what has passed. After the play has been read and the plot mastered, the reader should study the dramatist's treatment of "the mightiest Julius" — as he terms him elsewhere.[1] What reason is there why Cæsar's name rather than that of Brutus should form the title of the play? Analyze the portraiture. Wherein does boastfulness appear, — superstition, — weakness, — strength? Is there ground for such a conception of this character in history? What significance do you detect in the appearance of Cæsar's ghost in Act. V., — in the last words spoken by Cassius and Brutus?

Now study the characterization of Brutus, comparing him throughout with Cassius. What expressions in the first encounter of the two suggest that Brutus is already prepared to oppose Cæsar? Wherein does his humane spirit reveal itself? Wherein his impulsive temperament? What argument most appeals to Brutus in moving him to join the conspiracy? In what respect is Cassius superior to Brutus, — in what inferior? Note well Antony's tribute to the integrity of Brutus. Where was Brutus's mistake?

Analyze the portraiture of Antony. What are the real reasons for his success? Do you feel that he is honest in his protestations of affection? The subsequent career of this youth, as depicted in *Antony and Cleopatra*, should be followed in this connection.

The portrait of Portia is a masterpiece. Less than one hundred lines are spoken by this character, yet it is as distinct and strong as any that Shakespeare ever created. Portia, like Brutus, is a stoic, yet note how her wifely affection and fears assert themselves in the scene with Lucius (II. iv.).

None of Shakespeare's other plays is so filled with fine declamatory passages as this; their dignity and stateliness

[1] *Hamlet*, I. i. 114. Compare other allusions to Julius Cæsar in the plays: *Ham.* V. i.; *A. Y. L. I.* V. ii.; *II. K. H. IV.* I. i.; *K. H. V.* V.; *K. Rich. III.* III. i. etc.

are most impressive. A careful reading will fix them easily in memory.

THE GREAT TRAGEDIES. Of the principal tragic dramas, two may be selected for special study, although all must be read by one who wishes to know the power of Shakespeare. Here his genius is absolute. The element in tragedy which rouses human interest is not the sadness of disaster, but the thrilling effect of the struggle which dominates the action; the hero must contend. The Greeks termed the hero of tragedy the *protagonist;* and hence Milton names his dramatic poem, modeled after the ancient drama, *Samson Agonistes*, — the struggling Samson. In tragedy the *ant*agonizing force is stronger than the hero, and the drama ends in catastrophe and defeat. Now in the noblest form of tragedy our interest is centred not on a mere physical struggle, but on a mental conflict. This is the case in each of the two plays chosen: in *Hamlet* we have a struggle against temperament and circumstance; in *Macbeth*, a conflict between the forces of good and ill in a human soul. The one is the tragedy of a scholar; the other of a soldier.

V. HAMLET. The tragedy of *Hamlet* is commonly regarded as Shakespeare's masterpiece. None of his plays is more popular on the stage; none other contains so many problems for the critic and the interpreter. Volumes have been written upon the character of the Prince, but the mystery of Hamlet is the old and sacred mystery of personality which must ever baffle the most acute. Hamlet's story begins with the soliloquy (I. ii.) that shows his deep dejection over his mother's o'er-hasty marriage. In this frame of mind he hears from Horatio the report of the apparition. Note the effect of Horatio's story on Hamlet: would you think that the latter suspects any crime? What expressions here and in scene v. enforce this probability? Notice carefully the Ghost's words to Hamlet, and their effect. Especially significant is Hamlet's declaration (I. v. 29–31), which forms the starting-point of the action, which is ever the purpose of Hamlet's soul, and which, in the tragic irony of his fate, he is never to fulfill. Notice the force of lines 85, 86: —

> "Taint not thy mind, nor let thy soul contrive
> Against thy mother aught."

Note the perturbed condition of Hamlet's mind in the rest of the scene, and also his hinted purpose in lines 170, 180.

Act II. emphasizes Hamlet's dilatoriness. How swift was to be his flight to revenge; yet nothing has been done, although the ambassadors sent to Norway (I. ii.) have made the journey, performed their mission, and here are present to report (II. ii.). The "antic disposition" assumed by the Prince is exhibited in the dialogue with Polonius (lines 170–216), but is quickly laid aside in the conversation with Rosencrantz and Guildenstern (lines 220–370). Particularly interesting is Hamlet's discourse with the players (lines 409–530); then, most important of all, comes the soliloquy which closes the act. Hamlet's indecision is the fatal weakness which develops all the tragedy of the play.

The third act is always a point of intense interest in the serious drama. Here is the crisis of the action, the turning-point, or the opportunity for one. In the great third act of this tragedy, there are four scenes of vital importance. In the first Hamlet breaks with Ophelia; it is the crisis in her career. The apparent harshness of the Prince is for a kindly purpose; his counsel, "Get thee to a nunnery," is honest and sound. There is a sharper tone when Hamlet has a glimpse of Claudius with Polonius spying at his back; this is coincident with the question, "Where's your father?" The second scene is the most spectacular one in the drama; the climax in the cry of the guilty king for "lights," and his evident discomfiture, leave Hamlet no possible pretext of doubt upon which to base his indecision. In the following scene, quiet in comparison with the preceding, we have, nevertheless, the important crisis of the drama. Now Hamlet has his opportunity to kill Claudius, and yet he hesitates. As to the soundness of Hamlet's speculation, which disarms his purpose, the king's own comment is sufficiently clear (lines 97, 98); Claudius is a better theologian than is the young Wittenberg student, on this occasion at least. But the guilty king is passing his crisis also, — morally; con-

science has stabbed him to the point of true repentance, confession, and the abandonment of the fruits of crime, and there he halts. Scene iv. is intensely pathetic. Here Gertrude learns the truth regarding her own frailty; and her conscience is pricked also, — in vain. Again the Ghost appears to whet the almost blunted purpose of the Prince, and to interpose between distracted mother and more distracted son, — "nor let thy soul contrive against thy mother aught!"

Act IV. brings no accomplishment of Hamlet's purpose. In the fourth scene his fault is set before him in a striking manner. The reader now should turn back to previous scenes in which reference is made to Norway and to Fortinbras: what then appeared as slight and disconnected incidents now take on significance in Hamlet's remarkable soliloquy (IV. iv. 32–66). Note the contrast between these princes. Why, else, this audible tramp of foreign soldiery, this ever-recurring hint of the vigorous, combative, hot-blooded Norwegian? Laertes and Fortinbras, impulsive, passionate, are the natural foils to Hamlet, and emphasize his considerate moderation. Laertes, spoiled by his Paris training, yields to most foul temptation (his own suggestion), and covers his name with everlasting disgrace, himself a victim of his own contemptible plot. Fortinbras, on the other hand, always manly, always prince-like, — though scarcely more than the shadow of his presence falls across the stage, — redeems the spirit of the tragedy, and at last, by Hamlet's voice, assumes the Danish crown.

The last act opens with a strange, grotesquely comic scene, the only low-comedy in the drama, except that furnished by Hamlet's encounters with Polonius. Yet its entire effect is impressive: why? What can be said for the congruities of such an interlude in such connection? Note Hamlet's characteristic mood in his meditation upon Yorick's skull. What significance in his sudden fierce quarrel with Laertes in the grave? What is his probable feeling for Ophelia? Notice the foreboding expressed by Hamlet in the second scene, — his apparent fatalism. Study the effective composition of the catastrophe; enumerate the successive incidents. What

appropriateness is there in the injunction laid upon Horatio? Has Hamlet obeyed the Ghost's command?

This brief comment should suggest other lines of analysis in the interpretation of Shakespeare's Prince. The question of Hamlet's sanity may be considered, but after all that is a problem subordinate to the dramatic idea of the play. More profitable is it to follow the real tragic line of the drama found in the situation of a hero, responsible, yet by training and temperament unfitted to play his part: —

> "The time is out of joint, — O cursed spite
> That ever I was born to set it right!" (I. v. 189.)

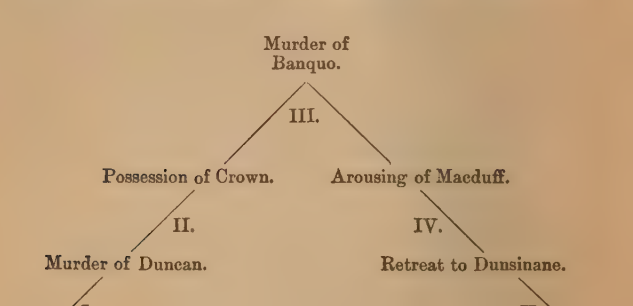
Special attention should be directed to all of Hamlet's soliloquies. In the soliloquy the dramatist always reveals the inmost thought of his character; these utterances are confidential and sincere. The famous passage beginning "To be, or not to be" (III. i. 56) is a case in point. The Prince of Denmark is never nearer the heart of his own tragic history than in lines 83–88. Here is the key to his character. Again he touches it in the soliloquy, IV. iv. 40–46. It should be noted also that this royal youth is not only the centre of all that moves in the great drama — he is practically alone amid the forces that are arrayed against him. Who are the *antagonizing* characters in this play? Should not Ophelia be numbered with them? On the other hand, who are with Hamlet? Marcellus, Bernardo, do not count; the players are only the instrument in his hand. The Ghost is not unfriendly, but cannot be looked upon as a champion or a coadjutor. It does not come to bring a father's comfort, but appears, a dread visitant of terror, to goad Hamlet to his task. Horatio, Hamlet's only confidant, is a student like himself — no more than Hamlet a man of action. The only positive service that he can render to his friend is to absent himself from felicity awhile, and in this harsh world draw his breath in pain to tell Lord Hamlet's story.

All the characters in this play call for study. Claudius, experienced, shrewd, desperate, under the burden of his guilt: what are the indications of his attitude toward Ham-

let? Gertrude, guiltless of murder, but weak and morally degraded by her infatuation with her husband's slayer. Polonius, a worldly-wise, conceited, meddlesome old man: whence has he the counsel which he administers with such unction to Laertes? What is the real spirit of his advice? It is his preference "by indirections, to seek directions out" (II. i. 66). Notice his method toward his son and daughter. Is it not his genius for spying that brings his death? Laertes is the type of courtier appropriate to Elsinore; contrast the influence of Paris with that of Wittenberg. What contrary motives bring Laertes and Horatio to the court? Pursue the contrast between Laertes and Hamlet in the event of a father's death. Ophelia is a pathetic rather than a tragic heroine. She is foredoomed to suffer. Too weak of will to attempt a single struggle, she buries her love in hopelessness and submits to be made a tool. Yet in character she is blameless, an innocent victim of harsh circumstance. Grief completely destroys her reason; she is not responsible for her death. Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are mere echoes of the court; shallow characters, they might exchange their names and no one be the wiser. Willing tools, they are most cleverly dispatched by their own frailty and by Prince Hamlet's superior cunning. The Ghost is a most important factor in the play. It is an intensely poetical conception — this shadowy protest of the dead against the unhindered prosperity of guilt. Shakespeare's introduction of supernatural visitants is always interesting, but never elsewhere so impressive as here. In *Richard III.*, *Julius Cæsar*, *Macbeth*, they appear, mere momentary apparitions; but here, in royal dignity and kingly mien, old Hamlet's perturbed spirit walks — not to affright the murderer, not to awaken pity, or to foretell defeat, but to disabuse the ear of Denmark and challenge justice against a usurper of the crown. An added interest attaches to this creation because Shakespeare played the part himself, and it was reckoned the "top of his performance."

VI. MACBETH. Like *Hamlet*, this is a romantic tragedy, in which the dramatist introduces a supernatural element in

the part played by the Weird Sisters, as well as in the apparition of Banquo's ghost. Notice the wonderful poetry of this play: point out passages which the fancy of the poet has made rich with imagery. Note the sweep and rush of the movement, the inexorable rapidity of the action. How does the opening scene prepare for the story of evil that follows? Study the action of the drama in this diagram: —



It will be seen that the crisis of the play is in the murder of Banquo: why should this incident, rather than the murder of King Duncan, form the dramatic crisis? What similarity in the two murders first rouses general suspicion against Macbeth? What is the full significance of Fleance's escape? Now point out how Macbeth's successive acts of tyranny conduce to his own downfall. Especially study the Macduff motive: how has Macbeth prepared an avenger of his own wicked deeds? Make a similar examination of his intercourse with the Weird Sisters. Show how ironically their predictions serve to betray their victim.

In analyzing the character of Macbeth, two problems are to be considered: (1) his relation to the Weird Sisters; (2) his relation to Lady Macbeth. Upon the solution of these two problems rests the question of Macbeth's moral responsibility for his crimes. First, is it the salutation of

these strange creatures on the blasted heath that suggests the murder of King Duncan? Study the immediate effect of their prediction on Macbeth. Why, do you think, does he say, "Stay, you imperfect speakers, tell me more," — and again, "Would they had staid"? What significance do you find in the conversations with Lady Macbeth, scenes vi. and vii.? It is well to inquire how far into the future these mysterious beings really see, and to what extent they are actually able to predict. The invocation of Lady Macbeth to the "murthering ministers" who in their "sightless substances" wait on nature's mischief is apparently addressed to them. They are by no means *witches* in the vulgar application of that word; rather does the number and the character of these apparitions connect them in some sort with the Fates. The older meaning of the word *wyrd* was *fate*. They may indicate the subtle intent of Macbeth's half-conscious purpose; their power seems to be only over those who are evilly inclined; they seem to understand the thought of their victim, to harp his own imaginings, and to lure him on in the direction of his desires, encouraging him to attempt the course he is inclined to follow. Compare *Genesis* iv. 7: "If thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door."

Secondly, as to the other problem; it should be noted that Lady Macbeth is not so much a foil to her husband as a complement; she is not used for the purpose of contrast so much as to supply his defect. It is possible to interpret her character as that of a woman selfishly ambitious to be queen, inciting her husband to a crime, and goading him on to the murder; in which case we must consider her the incarnation of all cruelty and wickedness, a fiend in woman's form. We may, on the other hand, interpret her action as based on her love for Macbeth, and find a motive for her obvious wickedness in the desire that he may possess the utmost fruit of his ambition. Which interpretation seems more just? The former was long held to be correct; the latter has more advocates now. In studying her character, note the signs of weakness which develop immediately after the murder of the king. Why does not Macbeth disclose to his wife his plans

for the murder of Banquo? What indications of tender feeling do you find shown by Lady Macbeth in her effort to protect her husband on the appearance of Banquo's ghost?

Study both these characters with reference to their expression before the murder of Duncan and afterward. What remarkable exchange of character do you discover in this double development? Particularly note the desperate force displayed by Macbeth as his doom approaches.

The character of Banquo is in admirable contrast to that of the Thane. Point out some of the differences between these two men. Do not fail to note the intense pathos of the passage wherein Macduff learns of his bereavement (IV. iii. 200–240).

Read the account of the real Macbeth as given by Holinshed, and included in many of the introductions to the play. In what way has Shakespeare enlarged his theme to the point of universality in its application? What, to your mind, is the moral purpose of this play?

Note. So much for the suggested lines of study in the plays recommended. Nothing has been said about textual criticism, investigation of sources, the helps and hindrances of commentators; very little concerning the philosophy or ethics involved. The purpose has been briefly to suggest some direction of the thought that may lead unconsciously to a degree of appreciation for the spirit of these great compositions, and a feeling for the art of the great dramatist who wrought them. Further details of analysis in interpretation and technique may better be left to a more mature and disciplined age.

If possible, the reading of the plays should be continued until all the important comedies and tragedies have been included. A special study should be made of the historical plays, which form a group by themselves; these are of greater value than is commonly realized. Taken together these English "histories" cover the period of the great civil wars, which we call the Wars of the Roses. As a series, far from exultant in tone, they seem to sound the refrain, "Lest we forget, lest we forget!" Their theme is *nationality*, and

their warning against discord is most impressive. *King John*, *King Henry V.*, and *Richard III.* are especially recommended.

Books that may be used with Profit.

Of the hundreds of volumes bearing upon Shakespeare and his works, these few are mentioned as helpful and generally easy of access. Of editions, those devoting a single volume to a play, with introduction and notes, are most desirable. The texts edited by William J. Rolfe (American Book Co.) are popular; those edited by Henry N. Hudson (Ginn) are also standard; the most modern texts of this character are in the *Arden Edition* (Heath), and the arrangement of this edition is admirable. The plays *Julius Cæsar*, *As You Like It*, *Merchant of Venice*, *Hamlet*, *Macbeth*, are included in the *Riverside Literature Series* (Houghton, Mifflin and Company). These are carefully edited and inexpensive. The authoritative text of Shakespeare's plays is that of the *Cambridge Shakespeare* (9 vols.), edited by William Aldis Wright. The *Henry Irving Edition* (Scribner) will be found a convenience in "cutting" plays for school presentation, portions unnecessary to the action being indicated. The *Variorum Edition* (Lippincott), by H. H. Furness (twelve plays now published), is a monument to American scholarship in this field. All material of importance has here been collected, and all the variations of text are noted.

Abbott's *Shakespearian Grammar* (Macmillan), Schmidt's *Shakespeare Lexicon*, and Mrs. C. C. Clarke's *Concordance to Shakespeare* are standard books of reference.

The *Life of William Shakespeare*, by Sidney Lee (Macmillan, 1899), is the best biography of the dramatist. The *Outlines for a Life of Shakespeare*, by J. O. Halliwell-Phillipps, is valuable for reference; it contains a mass of information, carefully gleaned, connected directly or indirectly with its subject. Biography and criticism are mingled in many books. Among the most useful are Hudson's *Life, Art, and Characters of Shakespeare* (Ginn), *Shakespeare, His Mind and Art*, by Edward Dowden (Harper's), and a most serviceable *Shakespeare Primer*, by the same author. Gervinus

and Ulrici are the most important German commentators on Shakespeare, and their criticism is often valuable. *Five Lectures on Shakespeare*, by B. ten Brink (Holt), contains much that is suggestive. Of the French critics, Taine and Victor Hugo may be referred to. G. Brandes, the Danish scholar, has produced *A Critical Study* of the poet. Mrs. Jameson's *Characteristics of Women* is excellent in the interpretation of Shakespeare's heroines. For the technical study of the dramas, R. G. Moulton's *Shakespeare as a Dramatic Artist* (Clarendon Press) is very helpful. In this field, Freytag's *Technique of the Drama*, and the compact volume on *The Drama* by Elizabeth Woodbridge (Allyn & Bacon), are also excellent.

Rolfe's *Shakespeare, the Boy* (American Book Co.) is an interesting sketch of the manners and condition of the times.

William Shakespeare, Poet, Dramatist, and Man, by H. W. Mabie (Macmillan, 1900), contains beautiful and valuable illustrations, which throw considerable light upon the age and its ways. Read *Great Englishmen of the XVI Century*, by Sidney Lee.

The development of English literature in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries may be traced in this tabular arrangement of authors' names and dates : —

The Rulers.	Prose.	Poetry.	Drama.
Edward IV. ...	William Caxton (died 1491)	.....	Miracle Plays and Moralities.
(1461–83)	Malory's *Mort Darthur* (1470) ..	Stephen Hawes (died 1512)	.....
Richard III. ...	.....	John Skelton (died 1529)	.....
Henry VII.	.....	.....	.....
Henry VIII. ...	Thomas More (1480–1535)	.....	John Heywood (died 1565).
(1509–47)	William Tyndale (1490–1536) ...	Thomas Wyatt (1503–42)	Nicholas Udall (died 1564).
Edward VI. ...	Roger Ascham (1515–68)	Earl of Surrey (1516–47)	*Ralph Roister Doister* (1550).
Mary	.....	*Tottel's Miscellany* (1557)	*Gorboduc* (1561).
Elizabeth.	Philip Sidney (1554–86)	*Astrophel and Stella* (1591)	"The Theatre" (1576).
(1558–1603) ..	Walter Raleigh (1552–1618)	Edmund Spenser (1552–99)	John Lyly (1554–1606).
James I.	Francis Bacon (1561–1626)	*Venus and Adonis* (1593)	Christopher Marlowe (1564–93).
(1603–25)	.....	*Rape of Lucrece* (1594)	William Shakespeare (1564–1616).
			Ben Jonson (1573–1637).

CHAPTER IV

THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

FROM BACON TO DRYDEN

I. The Last of the Elizabethans: Francis Bacon.
II. The Puritan Movement: John Milton.
III. Seventeenth Century Lyrics.
IV. The Restoration: John Bunyan, John Dryden.

I. THE LAST OF THE ELIZABETHANS: BACON.

It has, perhaps, been noted that the term *Elizabethan*, as used to designate an epoch in the history of our literature, is allowed to include much more than the reign of that remarkable queen. It was in the thirteenth year of King James that Shakespeare died, and Jonson lived until the twelfth of Charles I. Lesser contemporary dramatists, poets, and prose writers — many of whom cannot be mentioned in this work — are still described as *Elizabethans*. Even Milton is sometimes included in the group, although removed by more than a generation from the period in which most of these men flourished: but the likeness in tone, the quality of the verse, and the sweep of a great imagination — these characteristics are the distinctive marks of an Elizabethan writer; not the precise limits of a definite area of time.

Next to the dramas of Shakespeare, the prose works of Francis Bacon are regarded as contributing most to the glory of English literature in the age of Elizabeth and James. Bacon represents the intellectual type of that age; dispassionate in

Francis Bacon, 1561-1626.

judgment, coldly impartial even in his friendships, he practically applied his talents to gathering up all the fruits of scholarship, and in a tone itself resonant of his time, declared in a letter to Lord Burghley that he had taken all knowledge to be his province.

This son of Sir Nicholas Bacon, Lord Keeper of the Great Seal of England, was born at York House in the Strand, London, January 22, 1561. His mother was a zealous Calvinist, strict and stern. The boy was precocious, and bore himself with such an air of gravity that Elizabeth, visiting his father, called him her little Lord Keeper. At twelve years of age Francis Bacon entered Trinity College, at Cambridge, remaining at the University till the end of 1575. In the year following he began to study law at Gray's Inn. Admitted to the bar in 1582, he entered Parliament in 1584, representing the district of Melcombe, later sitting for Middlesex. During this period of his life Bacon was following the unpleasant and rarely profitable career of a suitor for royal patronage. His progress was slow. The famous Burghley, Elizabeth's prime minister, was his uncle; but from his hand the young solicitor received no favor. Robert Devereux, Earl of Essex, the generous patron of Edmund Spenser, one of the most admired and also one of the most irresponsible of courtiers, was now the special favorite of the queen: to him Bacon turned for assistance. With the aid of Essex, he tried to secure an appointment to the office of Solicitor-General in 1593, and was disappointed; but the liberality of his patron was shown in a gift of the beautiful estate of Twickenham Park, whither Bacon retired for a while to rest and study. In 1597 appeared the first edition of the *Essays*, ten in number.

Early Life.

The relations between Bacon and Essex furnish one

of the problems in an analysis of Bacon's character, while the results which developed out of those relations have much to do with the shadow which rests on this great author's fame. The Earl was six years younger than the man whom he had befriended, impulsive and headstrong as he was brilliant. In all honesty Francis Bacon seems to have done his best to tone down and to rectify the careless temper of his patron, and in vain. Essex, in spite of Elizabeth's indulgent kindness, at last became so involved in his folly that he fell liable to charges of treason, and in 1601 was brought to trial. In the process of the case Bacon appeared — unwillingly, as he declared — and as Queen's Counsel presented the argument against the Earl with such precision that only one event became possible: Essex was beheaded. Bacon accepted £1200 from the fines imposed on Essex's estate, and justified his conduct in the affair by a published defense in which he asserts that the maintenance of the State is superior to the ties of friendship.

The Earl of Essex.

In 1607 Bacon's ability finally received suitable recognition; he was made Solicitor-General. In 1613 he became Attorney-General; four years later he was appointed Lord Keeper of the Seal, and in 1618 rose to his highest office as Chancellor of England. He received the title of Baron Verulam, and afterward was made Viscount of St. Albans. For three years Francis Bacon enjoyed all the privileges and honors of his high position. His manner of living was that of a prince; his magnificence became proverbial. At the same time his devotion to study had never been forgotten; his philosophical work, the *Novum Organum*, or *The New Method*, appeared in 1620, and Bacon was recognized as the foremost scholar of his time. At the beginning of 1621 he was at the

Under James I.

summit of his prosperity, and then came one of the most notable reverses of fortune which ever overtook a man of fame.

The career of the Chancellor had been a brilliant one. A long accumulation of untried suits had been disposed of, and there seem to have been no complaints of injustice against the court. But Bacon had powerful enemies nevertheless, and at their instigation charges were sent to the Lords, by the House of Commons, affirming that the Chancellor was taking bribes. This was in March. Committees were appointed to investigate. Witnesses declared that bribes had been accepted, specifying sums of £300, £400, and £1000. Bacon fell ill; he offered no defense. "My Lords," he said to those who had been sent to ask if his written confession was to stand, "it is my act, my hand, my heart. I beseech your Lordships be merciful to a broken reed." Bacon's punishment was announced in April. It was ordered that he be fined £40,000, be imprisoned during the sovereign's pleasure, and be banished forever from both Parliament and court. The fine was remitted, and Bacon was released from the Tower in June. He was fully pardoned by the king in September, but never participated again in public affairs.

Bacon's Fall.

The disgrace of Lord Bacon was the fruit rather of a bad system than of deliberate crime. The bribes were always referred to as "presents," and it had been long the custom for high officials to accept gifts from those who had causes before them. It has never been shown that Bacon's decisions were influenced by these means. The pathetic side of the affair is most impressive. "All rising to great place is by a winding stair," said Francis Bacon, the philosopher, in his essay *Of Great Place;* "the standing is slippery and the re-

gress is either a downfall or, at least, an eclipse, which is a melancholy thing." And when writing *Of Wisdom for a Man's Self*, he had said: "They [*sui amantes*] become in the end themselves sacrifices to the inconstancy of fortune, whose wings they thought by their self-wisdom to have pinioned." In his fall Bacon remained preëminently the philosopher. He appears to have had no thought of evil in the acceptance of the presents; yet when the charges had been formulated, he accepted their conclusions without a protest. Very significant of the temper of the man is his remarkable declaration: "I was the justest judge that was in England these fifty years; but it was the justest censure in Parliament that was these two hundred years."

The Closing Years.

The rest of Bacon's life passed in retirement and study with his family at Gorhambury, near St. Albans. He enlarged the number of his *Essays*, compiled a *History of King Henry VII.*, wrote a philosophical romance somewhat on the lines of *Utopia*, entitled *The New Atlantis*, and further elaborated his system of philosophic study. He finally came to his death as a result of his devotion to science. Desiring to test the usefulness of snow as a preservative of flesh, he caught a severe cold in the process of the experiment; a fever followed, and on April 9, 1626, Francis Bacon died. He was buried at St. Albans.

The Inductive Philosophy.

Bacon's fame as a scholar is associated with his advocacy of the *inductive method* in scientific study. The system of Aristotle, called the *deductive* system, which by speculation enunciated certain principles, in accordance with which certain facts were supposed to harmonize, had been the common method of the schoolmen. To this method of study Bacon was opposed, and had left the University

with some contempt for the older system of thought. In his philosophical work he taught the necessity of beginning with facts, experimenting until the scholar should be certain of his data, and then proceeding to reason out the principles and ideas which they embodied. Bacon was by no means an inventor of the inductive system, but through his insistence upon this method of study he did contribute greatly to all subsequent advance in science. He called men to study nature directly, and demonstrated the value of experiment. In the application of his own theories he achieved little of importance. Although he described heat as a mode of motion, and was familiar with some of the principles of light transmission, he seems not to have been acquainted with Harvey's discovery of the circulation of the blood, and he rejected the theories of Copernicus.

Upon the *Novum Organum* Bacon concentrated all his thought. The work was written in Latin, because that was the language of scholars — "the universal language," as it was called; and Bacon shared in the opinion of his age that anything to endure must needs be put in the Latin tongue. In 1605 he had written an essay upon *The Advancement of Learning;* this was afterward elaborated in Latin under the title *De Augmentis Scientiarum*, and serves as the general introduction to Bacon's great treatise which was to be called the *Instauratio Magna Scientiarum*, of which the *Novum Organum* forms the second and most valuable part. The conclusion of this work, in which the author planned to formulate his philosophy, was never reached.

Novum Organum.

Bacon's *Essays* should be studied by every intelligent reader. The form and style are unique; but these qualities

are subordinate to the pungent truth and gathered store of wisdom that they contain. The term *essay* was borrowed, probably, from Montaigne, who in 1580 published his *Essais*. In his *De Augmentis Scientiarum* Bacon speaks thus: "I would have all topics which there is frequent occasion to handle . . . studied and prepared beforehand; and not only so, but the case exaggerated both ways with the utmost force of the wit, and urged unfairly as it were and quite beyond the truth. And the best way of making such a collection, with a view to use as well as to brevity, would be to contract these commonplaces into certain acute and concise sentences; to be as skeins, or bottoms, of thread which may be unwinded at large when they are wanted. . . . A few instances of the thing, having a great many by me, I think fit to propound by way of example. I call them Antitheses of Things." The first edition of the *Essays* appeared in 1597; there were ten of them. In the dedication to his brother Bacon calls them "the new half-pence, which though the silver were good, the pieces were small." A second edition appeared in 1612 and the number had been increased to forty. The final edition, published in 1625, included fifty-eight. In his dedication to Buckingham the author expresses his hope that "the Latin volume of them (being in the universal language) may last as long as books last."

Suggestions for Study.

For special study let the student take the twelve essays upon *Truth*, *Revenge*, *Adversity*, *Envy*, *Love*, *Great Place*, *Travel*, *Wisdom for a Man's Self*, *Friendship*, *Discourse*. *Gardens*, *Studies*. See if any regular plan of arrangement can be found; note the method of introduction, then consider the "unwinding." Outline some of these essays according to the topics discussed. What is the form of conclusion? Notice the vocabulary used: are there many obsolete terms, scientific terms, foreign terms? Describe the sentences: are they short rather than long? Count the words in the briefest sentences, those in the longest; compare the average sentence with that of some earlier writer. How does

Bacon construct his sentences? are they loose or periodic? are there many balanced sentences? How are the paragraphs made up? What figures of speech appear most frequently? Examine the illustrations. Do you find the expression clear? Describe in your own words the quality of Bacon's style.

What can you say of the thought? Wherein do you find reflections that bear on the author's own experience? Study particularly such brief passages as these: —

"Virtue is like precious odors, most fragrant when they are incensed or crushed: for prosperity doth best discover vice, but adversity doth best discover virtue." — *Adversity.*

"A crowd is not company, and faces are but a gallery of pictures, and talk but a tinkling cymbal, where there is no love." — *Friendship.*

"A man that hath no virtue in himself ever envieth virtue in others." — *Envy.*

"Certainly men in great fortunes are strangers to themselves." — *Great Place.*

"It is a poor centre of a man's actions, — himself." — *Wisdom for a Man's Self.*

Consider passages from Bacon's remarks concerning his own purposes and ideals, like the following (translated by Spedding from the Latin proem to a treatise on *The Interpretation of Nature*): —

"Believing that I was born for the service of mankind, and regarding the care of the Commonwealth as a kind of common property which, like the air and water, belongs to everybody, I set myself to consider in what way mankind might be best served, and what service I was myself best fitted to perform."

In the light of your reading how would you interpret the character of Francis Bacon? What seems to have been his estimate of human nature, — his integrity, — his wisdom?

The authority upon Bacon's life and the editor of his works is James Spedding; the complete edition of Bacon's *Works*, edited by Spedding, Ellis, and Heath, is published by Houghton, Mifflin and Company; also a popular edition

in two volumes, based upon the former. The biography of Bacon by R. W. Church, in *English Men of Letters Series*, is brief and serviceable. Macaulay's *Essay* on Bacon is a classic, but not a satisfactory study of its subject. Minto's *Manual of English Prose* (Ginn) contains much helpful material upon Bacon's composition.

Minor Prose Writers.

Fairly reflecting the spirit of the Elizabethan age are the prose works of Robert Burton (1577–1640) and of Sir Thomas Browne (1605–82), although the lives of these two men extend obviously beyond the natural limits of the age. Burton's curious volume — a classic in its kind — entitled *The Anatomy of Melancholy*, was inspired, doubtless, by the works of Francis Bacon. It is a singular collection of the lore of melancholy: discursive, amusing, quasi-scientific in character, learned and gossipy by turns. It appeared in 1621. Of more dignified tone and richer in its style is the *Religio Medici*, or *The Religion of a Physician*, by Sir Thomas Browne, published in 1643. The author, a graduate of Oxford, who had traveled widely and had taken his degree in medicine at Leyden, was a man of distinguished learning and rare wisdom. His admirable book he intended for his own "private exercise;" "the intention was not publick." It is really a confession of faith, and reveals a mind fond of the mystical side of the spiritual life, tolerant of others' views; the style of the work is stately and of great beauty. Of Browne's later essays that upon *Urn Burial, or a Discourse of the Sepulchral Urns lately Found in Norfolk* (1658) is best known. It is full of curious learning, set forth in prose of elaborate and majestic eloquence. Both works belong among our prose classics.

II. THE PURITAN MOVEMENT: MILTON.

When Shakespeare died in April, 1616, John Milton was a boy seven and a half years old. By chance his parents lived in a house on Bread Street, the thoroughfare on which stood the Mermaid Tavern, headquarters for the group of dramatists and poets of whom Shakespeare and Ben Jonson were illustrious members. Tradition has it that Shakespeare was present with his friends at a merrymaking in this historic tavern as late as 1614; and fancy has pictured a possible contact of these two spirits, Shakespeare and Milton, — one near the close of his career; the other, as yet unfledged, but destined to occupy a place in English letters second only to that held by his great predecessor. However, this is only fancy, and while the lives of Shakespeare and Milton thus overlap, the age of Milton's maturity was as separate and distinct from that of the dramatists as though a century lay between. In the boyhood of Milton the later Elizabethans were still alive; but his age was the age of Charles I., of Cromwell, and of Charles II. The climax of his generation was the development of Puritan England; its decadence was the Restoration.

Rise of Puritanism.

"No greater moral change ever passed over a nation," says Green, "than passed over England during the years which parted the middle of the reign of Elizabeth from the meeting of the Long Parliament (1583–1640). England became the people of a book, and that book was the Bible." [1] For the mass of the people there was no other literature, and when Bibles were ordered to be set up in churches, and public readers were employed, the people flocked to listen. The effect of this new familiarity with the Scriptures was speedily seen, not only in the language

[1] *Short History of the English People*, ch. viii. § 1.

of the nation, but in its character as well. Theology became the passion of the thoughtful, and the profound problems of religion occupied the minds both of scholars and common men. In this atmosphere the Puritan was born. He might be a gentleman by birth and breeding; on the other hand, he might be of the laboring class, uncultured and uncouth. In either case he was distinguished by his sobriety and strictness of life, his gravity of demeanor, his self-control, his democratic spirit, his opposition to all that smacked of license, of extravagance, of immorality, and by his recognition of the brotherhood of faith and practice. The strength of the Puritan movement found itself in the middle and professional classes. John Milton exhibited the characteristics of Puritanism in its highest and most attractive type.

Politics.

The Puritan movement was not merely a development in the intellectual and spiritual life of the nation; it was a political evolution as well. The accession of the Stuarts was accompanied by an unhappy emphasis on the doctrine of the divine right of kingship and an unpleasant stress on the authority of the state church; conformity was enjoined upon all. Yet the Nonconformists, the Independents, multiplied in spite of legal enactment and ecclesiastical tyranny. Incidental to these disturbances was the rise of a band of Separatists in Lincolnshire, whose teachings and polity were at variance with those of the Puritans, although in spirit and aim they were at one with the latter. For security and freedom these people fled to Holland, and in 1620 once more embarked to establish a permanent home in the new world. They were the Pilgrims, who landed from the Mayflower at Plymouth Rock when John Milton was a lad of twelve.

Following the dissolution of Parliament by Charles I. in 1629 there was no meeting of either house for eleven years. The king governed single-handed, and all abuses increased. In Scotland there was great excitement. At Edinburgh, in 1638, the old Covenant, which had been drawn in the time of Mary, was again brought forth, and in the churchyard of Grey Friars was signed amid intense enthusiasm by those who swore

The Covenant.

"by the great name of the Lord our God, to continue in the profession and obedience of the said religion, and that we shall defend the same, and resist all their contrary errors and corruptions, according to our own vocation and the utmost of that power which God has put into our hands all the days of our life." [1]

Hence came the name of the *Covenanters*. In 1643 this oath was subscribed to by the Commons.

In 1642 civil war began. Among the leaders of the Parliamentary forces Oliver Cromwell became more and more prominent. Within two years the Royalists were beaten, and Charles was nominally a prisoner of his own Parliament. Events were pushed to a crisis, and at the end of 1648 a remnant of the Commons, the famous Rump Parliament, condemned Charles to death "as a tyrant, traitor, murderer, and enemy to his country." In January, 1649, he was beheaded at Whitehall.

Civil War.

From 1649 to 1653 England was in name a republic. In 1652 Oliver Cromwell became the Protector; and upon his death five years afterward, the title descended to his son Richard, who maintained it weakly for two years. The fall of Puritanism in England was indicated by the return of the Stuarts in 1660, the accession of Charles II., and the

The Commonwealth.

[1] Green, ch. viii. § 5.

beginning of the period of the Restoration. During this turbulent epoch of civil commotion John Milton played no inconspicuous part. He was officially employed in the government of the Commonwealth. In his writings we find the clear expression of the Puritan spirit.

John Milton, 1608-74.

The English poet who, by common consent, holds a rank second only to that of Shakespeare, was born in London December 9, 1608. Milton's grandfather was a Catholic. His father, also John Milton, was a Protestant, and had been disinherited for his faith. By profession the poet's father was a scrivener; that is, he was an attorney and also a stationer. He was a man of property and of culture, appreciative of the value of learning and especially devoted to music. He composed several tunes, of which *York* and *Norwich* are still standard in the hymn books of to-day. He designed that his son should enter the Church, and planned with great care and liberality for his education.

Education.

Milton's training began at ten years of age under the direction of a private tutor in the person of a Puritan minister, a Scotchman, Thomas Young. He attended St. Paul's School in London, and in 1625, then in his seventeenth year, entered the University of Cambridge and was enrolled a student of Christ's College. Here Milton remained until July, 1632, when, at the age of twenty-three, he received the master's degree.

At Cambridge.

Of Milton's student life we have a few interesting details. We know that it was his practice to sit till midnight with his book, and that this close application to his studies was the first occasion of that trouble which resulted later in his blindness. We are told that he performed the academical exercises

to the admiration of all, and was esteemed a virtuous and sober person, yet not ignorant of his own parts. A picturesque and an attractive figure is this youth just coming of age — not precisely the type which the Puritan character is apt to suggest — a fair complexion, delicate features, dark gray eyes, and auburn hair falling upon his shoulders. The fairness of his oval face seemed feminine in its delicacy, and he was sometimes called "the lady of Christ's." His figure, if slight, was erect, and his gait was manly. Like all gentlemen he used the sword with skill, and thought himself a match for any one.

The young poet had composed English and Latin verses at an early age. His first English poem of any note belongs to the year 1626, and commemorates the death of an infant, his sister's child. In 1629 he produced the well-known *Ode on the Morning of Christ's Nativity*. "It is a gift," he says, "I have presented to Christ's natal-day. On that very morning at daybreak it was first conceived." Various odes of less importance followed, together with much minor verse. The *Epitaph* on Shakespeare was Milton's first published poem; it found a place among the tributes included in the folio edition of the plays, published in 1632. The sonnet, *On His Being Arrived at the Age of Twenty-three*, is a fine expression of the serious mind of this young Puritan who will use his ripening manhood as ever in his great taskmaster's eye.

At Horton.

Following the period of residence at Cambridge Milton went to live at his father's house in Horton, seventeen miles from London, near Windsor and Eton. In this quiet environment he passed the next six years of his life, making occasional visits to London, devoting his time to study, and finding delightful recreation in music and mathematics.

Here at Horton he wrote the group of five compositions which we call his minor poems, — not because of any inferiority in them, but because of the surpassing greatness of his later work. Indeed, had John Milton never written *Paradise Lost*, the author of *L'Allegro*, *Il Penseroso*, *Comus*, and *Lycidas* would have been reckoned among the great poets of our literature. These poems reflect the varying moods of Milton's mind. *L'Allegro* and *Il Penseroso*, companion pictures of the man in joyous, lively mood, and again serious, contemplative, solitary, appropriately precede the masque *Comus*, presented at Ludlow Castle (1634), in which the poet breaks forth in vigorous denunciation of the violence and license of the time. In *Arcades*, a lighter composition of the same period, there are no allusions of a political character; but in *Lycidas* (1637), the exquisite elegy inspired by the death of his friend Edward King, the poet voices an indignant protest against a corrupt and selfish priesthood, and comments unsparingly upon the evils of his age.

Continental Travel.

During 1638–39 Milton made the European tour. He visited Paris, and saw the eminent Dutch scholar Grotius. He then traveled through Italy, visiting Genoa, Leghorn, Pisa, Florence, and Rome. At Florence he remained two months, and while there went to see Galileo, who was in prison, and blind. This courtly, handsome, cultured Englishman was well received in the society of these Italian towns. At Rome he was graciously entertained for three months, and verses were written in his praise. Then came sudden news of a rising in Scotland. Milton knew its significance and the Puritan conscience spoke: "The sad news of civil war coming from England called me back; for I thought it disgraceful, while my fellow countrymen were fighting for liberty, that I

should be traveling abroad for pleasure."[1] But the crisis had not yet come, and the poet did not hasten his return. This first outbreak had subsided when he again arrived in London in July, 1639. Concerning his foreign visit and his own personal conduct in a period of general license, Milton afterward declared: "I again take God to witness that in all those places where so many things are considered lawful, I lived sound and untouched from all profligacy and vice, having this thought perpetually before me, that though I might escape the eyes of men, I certainly could not the eyes of God."[1]

In London.

The household at Horton was now broken up, and Milton took lodgings in London, where for a time he directed the education of his two nephews and the sons of other friends.

He was already pondering plans for some great poetical work, undoubtedly stimulated in this ambition by his intercourse with the writers of Italy and his recent acquaintance with their works. The subject of King Arthur had already suggested itself; and there are among the poet's papers of this date, lists of subjects, more than a hundred in all, some taken from British history, some from the Bible; there are also drafts of a sacred drama on the theme of *Paradise Lost*.

Milton's Prose Works.

A well-defined period in Milton's life is that included by the years 1640–60. This was the period of civil agitation and national turmoil attending the struggle between the two hostile parties, the trial of Charles, his execution in 1649, the establishment of the Commonwealth, and the downfall of the second Protectorate. Into the controversy of that troubled age the poet of puritanism flung himself

[1] *Defensio Secunda.*

wholly. In his *Second Defense* he declares: "I resolved, though I was then meditating other matters, to transfer into this struggle all my genius and all the strength of my industry."

To this period of Milton's life belong the prose works: the pamphlets, tractates, and defenses which make up his contributions to political and controversial literature. These prose writings comprise: —

I. A group of five pamphlets against episcopacy (1641–42).

II. Four papers on divorce (1643–45).

III. The *Tractate on Education* (1644).

IV. *Areopagitica*, — a plea for unlicensed printing (1644).

V. Many pamphlets upon civil affairs, including *Eikonoklastes* (1649), the *Pro Populo Anglicano Defensio* (1651), and the *Defensio Secunda* (1654).

Milton's controversial writings are marred by the abusive attacks which always characterized controversy in that day, but one or two of these papers stand far above the rest. The *Areopagitica*, particularly, is an eloquent and beautiful work. The areopagus was the forum of Athens, the court of public appeal, the Mars Hill of Paul's address; hence the significance of the title. Previous to publication all manuscripts were submitted to an official censor who might give or refuse license for their printing. The law had a demoralizing effect on the production of books; in the beginning of 1643 only thirty-five publications were registered. Milton's argument for the freedom of the press was a splendid defense of books, yet no results followed his brilliant appeal.

In March, 1649, two months after the execution of Charles I., Milton was appointed Latin Secretary to the committee of foreign affairs under the Com-

monwealth. In that year appeared a work put forth by Royalists, entitled *Eikon Basilike*, or *The Royal Image*, purporting to be the work of the king in his last days, and giving a most favorable picture of his religious fervor. Milton wrote a reply, *Eikonoklastes*, or *The Image Breaker*. While the duties of the secretary were primarily connected with the official correspondence of the Government, which was conducted in Latin, he was employed in these political controversies for many years. In 1651 he was warned by physicians that his sight, which had long been failing, would be utterly destroyed if he persisted in his arduous work; still he kept on at his task, and in the following year became entirely blind. Even then he retained his office and attended to its duties.

Latin Secretary.

The accession of Charles II. was the signal for a period of gross license and excess. It seemed as if all the graceless spirits of evil, which had been so rigorously repressed under the somewhat grim rule of the Puritans, had broken bounds and were free of any semblance of restraint. England swung from one extreme to the other, and the pleasures of the court were sought in ribaldry and vice. The last period of Milton's life was passed in the depression incident to such an age. When the Royalist party was again in power, prominent Independents were at once proscribed; and the former Latin Secretary had been too staunch a supporter of Cromwell and the Commonwealth to escape. For some months he was forced into hiding, remaining under protection of friends. The *Eikonoklastes* and the two *Defenses* of the English people were burned by the common hangman. From August to December, Milton was in actual custody, but was then freed. He was very poor. In 1666 his house was burned in the great fire which ravaged London in

The Restoration.

that year. The poet had been twice married. His first wife, Mary Powell, left three daughters, who are reported to have been rather undutiful and careless of his comfort. The second wife, Catherine Woodcock, whose marriage with the poet took place in 1656, lived but little more than a year. In 1663 Milton married again, and this third wife, Elizabeth Minshull, survived him.

Paradise Lost.

During the years 1658–65 the poet was engaged upon his great poem, *Paradise Lost*. When published two years later, it failed of the recognition due to so remarkable a work, although the fact is not surprising when we recall the character of the time and the conditions under which Milton's poem first saw the light.

Paradise Lost is our great English epic. The scope of its plan is the most ambitious that a poet could conceive; and yet with a superb consciousness of power correspondent to his task, Milton invokes the Heavenly Muse to aid his adventurous song

> "That with no middle flight intends to soar
> Above the Aonian mount, while it pursues
> Things unattempted yet in prose or rhyme."

His lofty purpose is to

> "assert eternal Providence
> And justify the ways of God to men."

It seems as if the poet at times felt that he was directly inspired in the execution of his task. He relied, as he declares, "on devout prayer to that Eternal Spirit who can enrich with all utterance and knowledge and sends out his Seraphim with the hallowed fire of his altar, to touch and purify the lips of whom he pleases." Elsewhere he refers to

PARADISE LOST.

BOOK I.

OF Mans Firſt Diſobedience, and the Fruit
Of that Forbidden Tree, whoſe mortal taſt
Brought Death into the World, and all our woe,
With loſs of *Eden*, till one greater Man
Reſtore us, and regain the bliſsful Seat,
Sing Heav'nly Muſe, that on the ſecret top
Of *Oreb*, or of *Sinai*, didſt inſpire
That Shepherd, who firſt taught the choſen Seed,
In the Beginning how the Heav'ns and Earth
Roſe out of *Chaos*: Or if *Sion* Hill
Delight thee more, and *Siloa's* Brook that flow'd
Faſt by the Oracle of God; I thence
Invoke thy aid to my adventrous Song,
That with no middle flight intends to ſoar

FACSIMILE OF THE FIRST PAGE OF MILTON'S POEM

(Reproduced from an original copy of the first edition (1667) in the Boston Public Library.)

"my celestial patroness, who deigns
Her nightly visitation unimplor'd,
And dictates to me slumb'ring, or inspires
Easy my unpremeditated verse." [1]

The great Puritan was indeed filled with the spirit of his faith, and his mind was stored with unusual treasures of knowledge from which he drew, almost unconscious of their wealth. His style, always dignified and stately, even in the minor poems, now rose to loftier heights. His great creation is the character of Satan. The most impressive portions of the poem are found in the first two books. Especially effective in the descriptive passages are the phrasings by which the poet suggests the vagueness and vastness of his scenes.

"Who shall tempt with wand'ring feet
The *dark unbottom'd infinite abyss*,
And through the *palpable obscure* find out
His uncouth way, or spread his very flight,
Upborne with indefatigable wings
Over the *vast abrupt*. . . ." [2]

Following the order of its plan, the epic proceeds with the account of the fallen angels, their infernal council, and Satan's journey to the new-created earth. The first pair are described in Eden. Raphael, the archangel, is sent and instructs them concerning the revolt of Satan and his hosts; he recounts the story of creation, and finally departs. The narrative of man's fall then follows, and the expulsion of the pair from Paradise. As has been stated, Milton's success is greatest in the earlier part of his work; the human characters are far less impressive than those that move amid the awful gloom of the earlier scenes. When the poet enters celestial regions and attempts to present Deity itself, he has passed the bounds of human ability, and

[1] Book IX. ll. 21–24.
[2] Book II. ll. 404–408.

fixed the limits of his own dramatic success. But there is no other poem like *Paradise Lost*. Its sublimity of vision, its height of imaginative creation, its solemn grandeur of great harmonies, have never been equaled in English verse.

Paradise Regained was written in 1666 in response to a suggestion that the poet should present this side of man's religious experience; and the latter poem stands as a pendant to the earlier. In the story of the temptation of our Lord the poet finds the material of a new epic, and now sings: — Last Poems.

> "Recover'd Paradise to all mankind,
> By one man's firm obedience fully try'd
> Through all temptation, and the tempter foil'd
> In all his wiles, defeated, and repuls'd,
> And Eden rais'd in the waste wilderness."

The last important composition, *Samson Agonistes*, appeared in 1671. This picture of the struggling champion of Israel, beset and afflicted by mocking enemies, gains a new significance when we remember Milton's blindness and the political environment of his closing years. The poem of *Samson* is cast on the lines of the ancient Greek drama and is characterized by classic stateliness and austerity of style.

Milton was not left lonely in his last years. Friends attended him, and foreigners in England sought him out. One writer[1] of the time declares that "he was visited by the learned much more than he did desire." One who saw him thus describes the poet as sitting in an elbow-chair in his chamber, dressed neatly in black; pale, but not cadaverous; his hands and fingers gouty, and with chalk-stones. He used also to sit at the door of his house in Bunhill Fields, wrapped in a gray coarse cloth coat, to enjoy the fresh air; and sometimes

[1] Aubrey.

here, sometimes in his room, he received his guests. Milton died November 8, 1674, and was buried in the Church of St. Giles, Cripplegate.

Suggestions for Study.

L' Allegro and Il Penseroso. These two exquisite poems should be studied together. Each is the pendant of the other, and the parallelism is very close. They are descriptive poems, — pictures of nature and of incident as they are seen by the poet under two varying moods.

L' Allegro is the man in lively mood; *Il Penseroso*, the man thoughtful, contemplative. Milton does not use the word "melancholy" precisely in the sense in which we now use that term.

In the study of these poems first note the many ways in which the parallelism is perfected. Compare the invocations of both poems, also their conclusions. What characters in *Il Penseroso* correspond to Euphrosyne (line 12), Venus (line 14), Bacchus (line 16), Jest and Jollity (line 26), Sport (line 31), Laughter (line 32), Liberty (line 36)? Now follow in their course respectively the incidents described: on the one hand those that mark the progress of the day, on the other those that attend the passing of the night. Compare these two pictures, the happy social scenes of country life, bright with sunshine, cheery with companionship, and blessed with contented toil, and the calm solitude of the night, bathed in the full moon's splendor, the peaceful quiet made more impressive by the mellow notes of the nightingale, the distant chiming of the curfew bell, or the drowsy calling of the hours by the watchman's muffled voice. Point out the correspondences in *L' Allegro*, lines 130–150, and *Il Penseroso*, lines 97–120. It should be understood that in neither poem does the author follow strictly an immediate succession of incidents continuous and unbroken. For example, in the first poem it is now the song of the lark and the crowing of the cock by which he is awakened; and then it is the sound of hounds and horn; again the whistle of the

ploughman and the milkmaid's song usher in the day. And so in the other poem if the even-song of Philomel be not forthcoming, the poet walks in the shadow and the moonlight, "or if the air will not permit," sits beside the glowing embers, or lights his lamp to pore over Plato or Æschylus, the Greek dramatists or Chaucer, as he feels inclined. And yet the passage of time is also clearly suggested. From your study of the poems can you say which mood is most honored of Milton or which is the more characteristic of him? In a detailed study of these poems it will be necessary to understand the allusions, classical and otherwise. In *L' Allegro* what is the significance of introducing Cerberus (line 2)? why Stygian (line 3)? Cimmerian (line 10)? In *Il Penseroso* why is Morpheus mentioned (line 10)? Prince Memnon's sister (line 10) is Hemera; the "starred Ethiope queen" is Cassiopeia; the Sea Nymphs are the Nereids: a classical dictionary will explain the force of the allusion here. Proceed thus with later allusions in the poems.

The metre of these two poems is simple. The first ten verses which form the introduction in each follow the rhyme order a — bb — a — c — dd — ee — e; afterward the verses rhyme in couplets. In the first ten lines, too, we have verses of three accents alternating with those of five; subsequently the verses are all of four accents. The type form is as in verse 11: —

"But cóme, thou Góddess, fáir and frée."

Milton varies the placing of the accent with an artist's skill that relieves the composition of all monotony. While it is right to read such poetry as this without thought of the mere mechanics of its structure, it is not right to pass over such consummate composition without some appreciation of its technique. Therefore notice the dropping of the first syllable of the normal verse in verse 13: —

"And by mén heart-éasing mírth."

Find other illustrations of this arrangement. Notice another variation, — the use of double or feminine rhymes in lines

45–46. Read aloud, emphasizing accent and pause, the passage in *L' Allegro* beginning "Haste thee, nymph" (line 25), and as far as line 40; does there not seem to be a natural appropriateness of the metre to the sense? In the same manner read the corresponding passage in *Il Penseroso* (lines 30–54). In *L'Allegro* (lines 45–46) the thought is not that the lark is to appear in the window, but that the poet, awakening at the summons of the songster, himself arises, throws off his melancholy, and greets the world, which is wide awake. Now take notice of the series of pictures descriptive of the rural pleasures. In how many phrases has the poet described the dawn? Compare line 40 with Chaucer's picture of the dawn in *The Knight's Tale* (lines 633–638), "The bisy larke," etc., and line 60 with Shakespeare in *Romeo and Juliet*, III. v. and *Hamlet*, I. i. 166. Think over the suggestiveness of the epithets used in such phrases as "dappled dawn" (line 44), "amber light" (line 61), "russet lawns" (line 71), "nibbling flocks" (line 72), "labouring clouds" (line 74). Consider how effective are lines like 116, 135–144. Notice the tribute to Jonson and Shakespeare. Just what does Milton mean in lines 132–134, and in *Il Penseroso*, lines 155–174? What sort of a man does the poet portray in the moods of these two poems?

Comus. The masque *Comus* is perhaps the most perfect of Milton's poems. It belongs to a class of compositions popular in the age of Elizabeth and James, and developed with elaborate form by Ben Jonson. The masque was a dramatic performance which combined the effects of poetry, music, and dancing, and was closely related to the more modern operetta. Milton's *Comus* was written in collaboration with Henry Lawes, a distinguished musician, at whose suggestion the poet had written *Arcades*, a briefer and slighter composition, presented at Harefield in honor of the Countess of Derby in the previous year. *Comus* was presented at Ludlow Castle in 1634 before the Earl of Bridgewater. Lawes composed the music for the songs and dances, superintended the presentation, and acted the part of the Attendant Spirit in the masque. The spirit of Mil-

ton's work is pastoral; the allusions are mainly to classic mythology, and the poem takes on an allegorical significance — as was common in the masque. The character of Comus had been introduced in an earlier masque by Ben Jonson, and there had been published at Oxford in this same year a Latin prose work describing a dream in which Comus figures. The story of the lost sister, sought for by her two brothers, is found in a play called *Old Wives' Tale*, by George Peele (1595). In *Comus* Milton uses for the most part the blank verse of ten syllables, with five accents, the ordinary metre of the drama. The theme of the masque is the grace of purity, the "sun-clad power of chastity" (line 782), which to the mind of the young Puritan was in as direful peril at the court of Charles as in the revel-haunted wood of Comus and his rout. Especially expressive of the Puritan ideal of virtue are the passages in which the Elder Brother speaks (lines 584–599), the splendid defiance in the Lady's speech (lines 756–799), and the closing words of the Spirit (lines 1018–1023). Compare the spirit of *Comus* with that of *L' Allegro*. Is there any contradiction in the sympathies expressed?

LYCIDAS. "In *Lycidas*," says Pattison, the biographer of Milton, "we have reached the high-water mark of English poesy and of Milton's own production." This is extreme praise; and yet it suggests that the poem is worthy of the most careful examination, and that in sentiment and form it should arouse some degree of genuine appreciation in every serious reader. What are some of the facts to be noted by a student of *Lycidas*?

First, it is an elegy, written in honor of Edward King, an old classmate of Milton at the University of Cambridge, where he had been in residence since June, 1626, first as undergraduate, then as fellow, and finally tutor. In the summer vacation of 1637 King made a trip by sea to Ireland and was drowned in the wreck of the vessel, which struck upon a rock not long after leaving the port. In the autumn a memorial volume was planned by the friends of Edward King, and for it Milton wrote his *Lycidas* in November of

the same year, 1637. The book itself was not published until 1638, and Milton's elegy was placed at its close. There are three great elegies in English literature which form a famous group, surpassing in general interest and impressive character all others of the kind. These are (1) Milton's *Lycidas* (1637), in memory of King; (2) Shelley's *Adonais* (1821), called forth by the death of Keats; and (3) Tennyson's *In Memoriam* (1850), the loving personal tribute and record of personal experience which followed the death of his intimate friend, Arthur Henry Hallam. Of these three poems Milton's is the most artificial and is less suggestive of a deep personal grief than is *In Memoriam*. Shelley's poem was inspired by pity and indignation rather than by love, but there is in it more of the spontaneity of passion than in the *Lycidas*. And yet Milton's great composition is filled with beauties of its own that make its distinction secure.

Secondly, *Lycidas* is a pastoral poem, employing the machinery of shepherds and utilizing the mythology of Rome. Since the appearance of Spenser's *Shepherd's Calendar*, pastoral motives had been the delight of Elizabethan writers and readers, not only in lyric poetry, but in dramatic verse, and even in romantic prose as well. Therefore it was only natural that Milton should figure forth his monody under the fiction of "the uncouth swain" who

> "touched the tender stop of various quills
> With eager thought warbling his Doric lay."

Third, the spirit and the tone are strikingly in unison throughout. The introduction presents the shepherd, lamenting his own immaturity perhaps, compelled by

> "Bitter constraint and sad occasion dear"

to rudely break in on nature's course with a disturbing touch, to force a tribute because Lycidas is dead — dead ere his prime. There is, of course, in this suggestion of reluctance, an allusion to Milton's formulated resolve, after the completion of his masque of *Comus* (1634), not to resume the poet's voice until another epoch should dawn in his own career and in his country's history. But —

"Hence with denial vain and coy excuse:"

and thus the Sisters of the Sacred Well are invoked by the poet and he proceeds with his gracious task. In keeping with the classic character of the poem are the proper names employed, which are familiar terms in the Latin Eclogues; the mythological allusions should be identified. There are some inconsistencies, anachronisms, as the introduction of the Pilot of the Galilean lake — St. Peter, of course — (line 109), and of Him who walked the waves (line 173); as well also the allusion to the dead shepherd's entertainment by "all the saints above" (line 178). The use of classic names to designate English localities and institutions is justified by the nature of the pastoral. Examples are Mona (Anglesey), Deva (the Dee) (line 55), Camus (the genius of Cambridge, where the poet and his friend had studied) (line 103).

Interesting is the allusion to contemporary literature contained in lines 64–69: —

> "Alas! what boots it with uncessant care
> To tend the homely slighted shepherd's trade,
> And strictly meditate the thankless Muse?
> Were it not better done as others use,
> To sport with Amaryllis in the shade,
> Or with the tangles of Neæra's hair?"

In this passage Milton suggests the query whether it be better to follow the high ideal of purity, simplicity, and stern morality which was his poetical creed, or to join in the loose and pleasure-loving chorus of Cavalier song writers and amatory poets of Charles's court.

In the passage beginning

> "Last came, and last did go,
> The Pilot of the Galilean lake" (lines 109–110),

we catch a glimpse of the real passion of Milton's soul, almost his first formal attack on the abuses and errors of the spiritual leaders of his day. Edward King had been intended for the Church, and the poet mourns his untimely death as for one who would have made a good pastor, a true shepherd. In the person of Peter the indignant poet exclaims: —

"How well could I have spar'd for thee, young swain,
Enow of such as for their bellies' sake
Creep, and intrude, and climb into the fold?
Of other care they little reckoning make
Than how to scramble at the shearer's feast,
And shove away the worthy bidden guest;
Blind mouths! that scarce themselves know how to hold
A sheep-hook, or have learn'd aught else the least
That to the faithful herdman's art belongs!"

The expression "blind mouths" is a famous one and has caused considerable criticism and comment. It seems to be decidedly a mixing of ideas, and when we try to follow the thought further, we are puzzled by the introduction of a new metaphor in the use of the sheep-hook, or shepherd's crook, and wonder how the combination of blind mouths holding a sheep-hook could be conceived. But of course this is intense concentration of thought and figure both; Shakespeare allows himself such license again and again; and here the poet's thought is clear enough, while it gains tremendous force from the mingling of the metaphors. Milton is speaking of the bishops and the pastors of the established state church. Now a bishop is a watchman, an over-*seer*, and a pastor is a shepherd, a feeder of the sheep. What, then, more striking figure can be imagined to express "the precisely accurate contraries of right character, in the two great offices of the Church — those of bishop and pastor"? — as John Ruskin points out in his essay, *Sesame and Lilies*. Concerning the exact application of the reference to the two-handed engine in line 130, at least two different interpretations have been urged, and Milton's thought is uncertain. With line 132,

"Return, Alpheus; the dread voice is past,
That shrunk thy streams,"

the poet resumes the purely pastoral strain and continues his simpler Doric lay.

Milton employs some native Anglo-Saxon words that have in time become unusual if not obsolete, but like all such words they carry peculiar force when their meaning is rightly understood. Thus *welter* (line 13) means *to roll*, or *wallow*, *to tumble about*, and is particularly suggestive of the forlorn

pitilessness of the tossing waves as they carelessly pitch and roll the body of the drowned. *Scrannel* (line 124) means *pared* or *peeled, scraped till thin and poor; rathe* (line 142), early positive of *rather; uncouth* (line 186), literally, *unknown, strange*, hence, later, *awkward*.

Brief Bibliography.

The authority on Milton is David Masson. Masson's *Life of John Milton, narrated in connection with the political, ecclesiastical and literary history of his time* (Macmillan), is the source of all subsequent statement, and is one of the few great biographies in our literature. The life of Milton in *English Men of Letters Series*, by Mark Pattison, is brief, as is that by Garnett in the *Great Writers Series*.

Interesting studies of Milton have been made by Addison in the *Spectator*, 267, Johnson in his *Lives of the Poets*, Macaulay in his essay on *Milton*, Lowell in *Among my Books*, Matthew Arnold in *Essays in Criticism*, 2d ser.

In special criticism Stopford Brooke's *Milton*, in *Classical Writers Series*, is valuable. The notes upon the minor poems are elaborate in Hales's *Longer English Poems*. In Ruskin's *Sesame and Lilies* there is a well-known and helpful comment on *Lycidas*. A good edition of *Paradise Lost* is that edited by John A. Himes (Harpers), with introduction and notes. Masson's *Three Devils, Luther's, Milton's, Goethe's, and Other Essays* is recommended. Taine's *History of English Literature* contains some amusing, although not very profound, criticism upon Milton's epic.

Macaulay's chapter on "The Puritans" and Green's *Short History*, ch. viii., should be read for information on the times.

Milton's *Complete Poetical Works* are published in the Cambridge Edition (Houghton, Mifflin and Company).

III. SEVENTEENTH CENTURY LYRICS.

Besides Milton there was no great poet in England during the period of civil discord attending the rise of Puritanism and the era of the Commonwealth; and

yet there were not a few who laid claim to the title of "poet," and some whose contributions to English verse are far from unimportant.

The Metaphysical Poets.

A peculiar phase of the poetical art is found in the compositions of a little group of versifiers who are frequently described as the *metaphysical poets*. First in point of time was John Donne, who appears to have been the leader of the school. Reared a Catholic, he later joined the Anglican Communion, and became a clergyman in 1615. In 1621 he was made Dean of St. Paul's. His early verse was amatory and passionate; his later productions were religious and devotional. His style was later described aptly by Dryden, who declared that Donne was "the greatest *wit*, though not the best poet of our nation." The word *wit* was here used, as generally at the close of the seventeenth century and the beginning of the eighteenth, to denote a clever or ingenious writer rather than a humorous one, and was applied to the person as well as to the element essential in his work. It found its application in the unusual and sometimes fantastic turns of thought, often laboriously conceived, that distinguish the writings of Donne and his school.

John Donne, 1573-1631.

George Herbert, 1593-1632.

"Holy George Herbert," as Izaak Walton named him, was one of the best examples of this group, as well as one of its most important representatives. In his lengthy poem of good counsel, entitled *The Church Porch*, for example, he has this to say: —

> "Drink not the third glasse which thou canst not tame,
> When once it is within thee; but before
> May'st rule it, as thou list, and *pour the shame,*
> *Which it would pour on thee, upon the floore.*
> It is most just *to throw that on the ground*
> *Which would throw me there,* if I keep the round."

Again, in *The Sacrifice*, with its refrain of simple pathos, we are surprised by more than one conceit as singular as this: —

> "Behold, *they spit on Me* in scornful wise;
> *Who by My spittle* gave *the blind man eyes*,
> *Leaving his blindness* to Mine enemies:
> Was ever grief like Mine?"

Because of this grotesque ingenuity of allusion and comparison the term *metaphysical* was used of these poets by Samuel Johnson; and by this title they are best described.

George Herbert was in seriousness of tone and saintly character more like Milton than any other of the writers here discussed. He was born in Wales, and received his university training at Trinity College, Cambridge. In 1630 he became Vicar of Bemerton, near Salisbury. His poetry is wholly devotional. It is he who wrote of *Sunday* the familiar lines: —

> "O day most calm, most bright!
> The fruit of this, the next world's bud,
> The indorsement of supreme delight,
> Writ by a Friend, and with His blood;
> The couch of time; care's balm and bay;
> The week were dark, but for thy light:
> Thy torch doth show the way."

Thorough Royalists in their attachments were the three poets Quarles, Crashaw, and Vaughan. The first named was a student of Christ's (Milton's) College at Cambridge, and was later secretary to Archbishop Usher. In his *Divine Emblems* he produced a moralizing poem full of the mannerisms of this group. Richard Crashaw, the son of an Anglican clergyman, was educated at the Charterhouse School and at Cambridge. He finally became a Catholic, and during the last few years of his life, through the influence of

Francis Quarles, 1592-1644.
Richard Crashaw, 1613-49.
Henry Vaughan, 1621-95.

Queen Henrietta Maria, found an asylum in Italy. Crashaw greatly resembles Herbert in thought and manner. A line from one of his Latin poems, descriptive of the miracle at Cana, is frequently quoted in devotional literature: —

> "*Nympha pudica Deum vidit et erubuit.*"
> "The modest water saw its God and blushed."

His principal volume was entitled (by its editor) *Steps to the Temple;* it appeared in 1646.

Henry Vaughan was a Welsh physician; he published in 1650 a collection of verse, to which he gave the title of *Silex Scintillans*, or *Sparks from the Flint.* His work also shows the strong influence of his countryman, George Herbert.

George Wither, 1588-1667. Andrew Marvell, 1621-78.

Stoutly Puritan in spirit were the two minor poets Wither and Marvell. The former, in 1642, sold his estate to raise a troop of horse for Cromwell's army; the latter had attracted the attention of Cromwell, and was employed by him up to the time of his death. In 1657 Marvell was appointed assistant to Milton in the Latin Secretaryship; and this association with the great poet has made his name more familiar than his verses could have done. Marvell's poems were, however, distinguished by their classic flavor and by a very real appreciation of nature, — a quality not common in the minor poetry of the age. They were written for the most part in youth.

Wither's verse is mainly devotional in character, consisting of *The Hymns and Songs of the Church* (1623), a translation of the *Psalms of David* (1631), *Emblems* (1634), and *Hallelujah* (1641). A fine pastoral poem, *Shepherds Hunting* (1613), was the work of an earlier period.

A singular fate has overtaken the fame of Abraham Cowley, who was esteemed by his own generation the greatest of English poets. He was a disciple of the metaphysical school, and was made famous by the ingenuity of his verse even in boyhood. His first volume appeared when he was but fifteen; while a student at Cambridge he wrote the larger part of a long epic on King David, the *Davideis*, which he hoped would inspire the composition of more biblical epics. Cowley was attached to the Royalist cause, and accompanied Queen Henrietta Maria, in capacity of secretary, to France. He was the author of *Pindarique Odes*, in imitation of the classic poet, and of a series of love poems under the title of *The Mistress*. Although he attained the distinction of a burial in Westminster Abbey, Cowley's reputation as a poet began to wane soon after his death, and he has since occupied a minor position among the poets of this group.

Abraham Cowley, 1618-67.

Three or four of the minor poets of this age fall naturally into a group by themselves; these are the representative poets of the Cavaliers. Gay, light-hearted gentlemen, gallant in both love and war, fond of the pretty and pleasing rather than of the serious and impressive phases of life's experience, they produced some dainty and charming verse, but spent their talents upon trifling themes of sentiment and pleasure. "Idle singers of an empty day," their activity included none of the offices of prophet or seer.

The Cavalier Poets: Thomas Carew, 1589-1639; Sir John Suckling, 1609-42; Richard Lovelace, 1618-58.

Carew, Suckling, and Lovelace were all prominent in the court of Charles I., and are sometimes distinguished by the name of the *Caroline poets*. Characteristic of their songs, which still display the artificial

and far-fetched imagery of the metaphysical school, are the following stanzas of a song by Carew: —

"Ask me no more where Jove bestows,
When June is past, the fading rose,
For in your beauty's orient peep
These flowers, as in their causes, sleep!
. . . . . .
Ask me no more whither doth haste
The nightingale when May is past,
For in your sweet dividing throat
She winters and keeps warm her note;"

and so forth. It was Suckling who sang merrily: —

"Out upon it, I have loved
Three whole days together;
And am like to love three more
If it prove fair weather.
Time shall moult away his wings
Ere he shall discover
In the whole wide world again
Such a constant lover."

His lively *Ballad upon a Wedding* is one of the brightest and prettiest of the graceful compositions of the group. His description of the bride is often quoted: —

"Her finger was so small, the ring
Would not stay on which they did bring;
It was too wide a peck:
And to say truth — for out it must —
It looked like the great collar — just —
About our young colt's neck.
Her feet beneath her petticoat,
Like little mice, stole in and out,
As if they feared the light:
But oh! she dances such a way!
No sun upon an Easter day
Is half so fine a sight."

Lovelace strikes a higher note in his verses *To Lucasta on Going to the Wars*: —

"True, a new mistress now I chase,
The first foe in the field;

And with a stronger faith embrace
A sword, a horse, a shield.
Yet this inconstancy is such
As you, too, shall adore:
I could not love you, dear, so much,
Loved I not honor more."

The vigorous, hearty spirit of Herrick's verse still keeps the fame of that lusty poet green. He is the foremost of the minor writers in this seventeenth century group. A student and fellow at the University of Cambridge for fourteen years, and afterward a clergyman in a quiet vicarage of Devon, there is much in his very lively verse to suggest other than the studious or clerical profession. In spirit Herrick was thoroughly Elizabethan. *Corinna's Going a-Maying* is one of his best known lyrics: —

Robert Herrick, 1591-1674.

"Come, let us goe, while we are in our prime,
And take the harmless follie of the time.
We shall grow old apace and die
Before we know our liberty."

In his poem *To the Virgins to make much of Time*, Herrick gives this advice: —

"Gather ye rosebuds while ye may:
Old time is still a-flying;
And this same flower that smiles to-day
To-morrow will be dying.
Then be not coy, but use your time
And while ye may, goe marry;
For having lost but once your prime,
You may forever tarry."

It was Herrick, too, who described his verse and, incidentally, that of his brother minstrels in these lines: —

"I sing of brooks, of blossomes, birds, and bowers;
Of April, May, of June, and July flowers;
I sing of May-poles, hock-carts, wassails, wakes;
Of bridegrooms, brides, and of their bridall-cakes."

There is no indication in his writings that he was

moved by the momentous events of the days in which he lived. There is much of the "joy of mere living," and a frequent turning into vulgar sensuality. His most characteristic poems are contained in his *Hesperides*. The collection entitled *Noble Numbers* consists of devotional songs on the subject of Christ's birth and passion.

Edmund Waller, 1605-87.

Edmund Waller, the last of the metaphysical poets, was a Royalist, like most of the group; but he served the Commonwealth as readily as the Crown, and his reputation is that of a turncoat and a coward. Waller was master of an eloquent tongue and a lively wit; he was distinguished as an orator and a versifier. Having indited a famous *Panegyric* to the great Oliver, he greeted Charles II. with flattering congratulation *Upon His Majesty's Happy Return.* When the king called the poet's attention to the fact that the earlier poem was clearly the better of the two, Waller at once replied, "Poets, sir, succeed better in fiction than in truth."

Waller's favorite verse form was the rhymed couplet, which appears so conspicuously in the poetry of the succeeding age. His influence upon the next great poet, John Dryden, was very marked.

IV. THE RESTORATION: BUNYAN, DRYDEN.

John Bunyan.

In November, 1628, while John Milton was about finishing his third year of university life at Cambridge, John Bunyan was born at Elstow, a village in Bedfordshire, not many miles from Cambridge on the west. There was a sharp contrast in the conditions that ruled the lives of these two men, and yet the son of the Elstow tinker was destined to find a place in literature not far below that filled by the great Puritan poet himself.

Bunyan's school days were few and unproductive. Such school training as he gained he had at the Bedford Grammar School, and the little he learned he declares that he soon lost. His true education came through his contact with men. "I never went to school to Aristotle or Plato," he writes; "but was brought up at my father's house in a very mean condition, among a company of poor countrymen." Thomas Bunyan, the father of John, describes himself as a "braseyer." There was a forge in the little cottage occupied by him and his family at Elstow, and at this forge John Bunyan, too, was taught his father's trade. The brazier, or tinker, of that day was often upon the road, a not unwelcome visitant at the isolated farms, where there was plenty of work to his hand in the mending of utensils and tools. Convivial and careless in their habits, these men usually partook of the vagabond type, and although John Bunyan affirms that he was never a drunkard and never unchaste, he declares that, even as a child, he "had few equals in swearing, lying, and blaspheming the holy name of God." At sixteen years of age Bunyan became a soldier in the Civil War. It is not altogether certain on which side he served, but the presumption is that he was drafted into Cromwell's army, and that he fought under the leadership of Sir Samuel Luke, the prominent parliamentarian of Bedford, the reputed original of Butler's *Hudibras*. Bunyan's military career was brief, for the campaign was closed at Naseby, some six months after he entered the army. Occasional reminders of this period are to be found in Bunyan's works, as in the description of the combat with Apollyon, and the taking of the town of Mansoul, in *The Holy War*. In 1646 Bunyan resumed his trade at Elstow, and two or three years later he married. His

Early Life.

wife was a pious woman as poor as himself; her dowry consisted of two religious books then popular, — *The Plain Man's Pathway to Heaven* and *The Practice of Piety*. "In these," says Bunyan, "I should sometimes read with her, wherein I also found some things that were somewhat pleasing to me."

Peculiar Religious Experiences.

The next four years of Bunyan's life were characterized by peculiar mental and spiritual experiences. Intensely sensitive by temperament, and gifted with an imagination abnormally active, he now passed through a period of religious struggle so vivid and so acute that his impressions became realities; their effects were profound. Most of the indulgences that he reckoned sins were no more serious than the ringing of the church bells and participation in the dancing and other Sunday sports upon the village common. But these amusements were looked upon by the pious Puritans as dangerous vanities, likely to distract the soul from its proper aims, and therefore frowned upon and rebuked; and so, one Sunday while engaged in some game on Elstow Green, he tells us, "A voice did suddenly dart from Heaven into my soul, which said, 'Wilt thou leave thy sins and go to Heaven, or have thy sins and go to Hell?' At this I was put to an exceeding maze. Wherefore I looked up to Heaven and was as if I had with the eyes of my understanding seen the Lord Jesus looking down upon me as being very hotly displeased with me." One morning, going into Bedford, he overheard three or four poor women talking together by a cottage door in the sunshine. They were speaking of the Christian life, and again his sensitive conscience was stirred. Once more he came to listen to the women's talk, and there was born in him "a great softness and tenderness of heart, and a great bending in his mind" toward holy thoughts.

Then followed a long experience of alternating hope and terror, with grotesque temptations, vivid impressions as of voices, sudden visions, moments of peace, seasons of gloom and despair. At last John Bunyan saw a great light. His conversion was complete. At once he joined the communion of Nonconformist brethren at Bedford, and some years later became the pastor of the church.

In Bedford Jail.

The Restoration period brought much bitter experience to the English Dissenters. The leaders of the Established Church, in revenge for their previous loss of privilege under the severity of Puritan rule, now, under Charles II., sought retaliation in strenuous laws against the Nonconformists. The holding of conventicles, as the public meetings of Dissenters were termed, was rigorously forbidden, and many were the brethren of the Puritan faith who now paid by imprisonment and fine the penalty of meeting for public worship in the manner which their consciences approved. The converted tinker was now a lay preacher among his people, and so conspicuous had he become because of his popularity and his boldness of speech, that he was almost the first to suffer through the intolerance of the time. On the 12th of November, 1660, while preaching to a company of people who had gathered in a small hamlet thirteen miles from Bedford, Bunyan was arrested, and after a farcical trial, which he has unmistakably described in the account of Faithful's experience at Vanity Fair, he was thrown into the county jail at Bedford, and for twelve years kept a prisoner, sometimes enjoying a degree of liberty, but for the most part under strict constraint. The separation from his wife and two little daughters, one of whom was blind, he deeply felt. But he would not accept liberty at the price of a promise to abstain

from his religious work. A part of his time he gave to the making of tagged shoe-lacings for the support of his family. By no means alone in his prison, he played the part of the apostle, and was a pastor to those who were in confinement like himself. Some of Bunyan's sermons thus preached found their way into print. During his imprisonment, also, he wrote many tracts, among them *The Holy City* (published 1665) and his *Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners*, the account of his own conversion (1666). In 1672, during the brief operation of the Declaration of Indulgence, Bunyan was released, and now was formally made pastor of the Bedford church. But in the early part of 1675, the Declaration having been suspended, he was again arrested and confined for six months in the town jail. During this second imprisonment it was that this unlettered man of genius wrote his immortal allegory, at least in part. The *Pilgrim's Progress* was entered in the Stationers' Register under date of December 22, 1677, and appeared in print early in 1678, not quite four years after Milton's death. The immediate popularity of the *Pilgrim's Progress* is shown by the fact that no less than ten editions were issued up to 1685. In 1681 it was printed at Boston, and the following year an edition appeared at Amsterdam. Since its first publication it has been translated into upwards of eighty-four languages and dialects, and has inspired numerous imitations. In 1680 Bunyan published *The Life and Death of Mr. Badman*, and in 1682 *The Holy War*. The second part of *Pilgrim's Progress*, containing the story of Christiania and her children, appeared in 1684.

Later Life.

During the last years of his life John Bunyan was a famous man, greatly beloved by his people. Whenever he preached in London, the church was crowded to the doors. On one occasion it is said

that he was half pulled, half lifted into the pulpit over the heads of the throng. He was noted for his kind heart and his works of mercy. Upon his last journey to London he rode many miles out of his way to accomplish the reconciliation of a father and son. That good errand accomplished, he suffered exposure to severe weather on resuming his journey, which resulted in a fever, from which he died August 31, 1688, in London. His published works, including pamphlets and sermons, are some sixty in number.

Pilgrim's Progress.

For consistent and forceful allegory Bunyan's work has no rival in modern literature. Says Macaulay: —

"Bunyan is almost the only writer who ever gave to the abstract the interest of the concrete. In the work of many celebrated authors, men are mere personifications. We have not a jealous man, but jealousy; not a traitor, but perfidy; not a patriot, but patriotism. The mind of Bunyan, on the contrary, was so imaginative that personifications, when he dealt with them, became men."

And thus the characters in Bunyan's dream have found a permanent place in the world of letters. Here for example is Pliable, who goes a little way with Christian on his pilgrimage to the Celestial City, but having fallen into the Slough of Despond, scrambles out on the nearer side and betakes himself homeward to the City of Destruction; and here is Mr. Talkative, who delights to discourse on histories and mysteries, but can see no difference between *crying out* against sin and *abhorring* sin. Then comes Mr. By-ends of Fair-speech, who has always had the luck to jump in his judgment with the present way of the times, who waits for wind and tide, and is for religion when he walks in his golden slippers in the sunshine and with applause. The incidents that befall the pilgrims on

their journey are subtly imagined and very suggestively described. Such is the fall into the miry slough because of Christian's failure to see the steps — which are God's promises; the false guiding of Mr. Worldly Wiseman, who would send Christian to Legality's house to be relieved of his burden; the climbing of Hill Difficulty, the encounter with the lions, the fierce combat with Apollyon — "the dreadfullest sight," says the dreamer, "that ever I saw." Bunyan's picture of Vanity Fair is exceedingly real, and so is his account of the experience in Doubting Castle, in the power of Giant Despair. Thus does Christian pursue his pilgrimage with occasional seasons of joy and refreshment, as in the House Beautiful, among the shepherds on the Delectable Mountains, and amid the flowers and pleasant streams of Beulah land; but for the most part contending with the difficulties and perils of the road, until the dark and bridgeless river has been safely crossed, and he is welcomed with the ringing of bells and the blare of trumpets into the Celestial City. It is a marvelous panorama of the Christian life.

Whence did this man, self-taught, derive the power to create so great a masterpiece? The answer is plain, but none the less touches a vital point. The Bedford preacher spoke only of what he knew. The adventures of Christian and of Hopeful had been his own: he had even entered somewhat into the martyrdom of Faithful. Nay, more: the defects and vices of those waverers and contentious persons who were met with on the way had been thorns in his own flesh, and again here, he knew all too well whereof he spoke. Deprived of the advantages of the schools, he had studied one book until he knew it through and through; that book was the English Bible. Not only had he absorbed its doctrine, he had caught something of its very style. In his

THE

Pilgrim's Progress

FROM

THIS WORLD,

TO

That which is to come:

Delivered under the Similitude of a

DREAM

Wherein is Discovered,

The manner of his setting out,

His Dangerous Journey; And safe Arrival at the Desired Countrey.

I have used Similitudes, Hos. 12. 10.

By *John Bunyan.*

Licensed and Entred according to Order.

LONDON,

Printed for *Nath. Ponder* at the *Peacock* in the *Poultrey* near *Cornhil*, 1678.

FACSIMILE OF TITLE-PAGE, PILGRIM'S PROGRESS, FIRST EDITION

hands the plain vernacular lost all vulgarity; indeed, it took on the tone of epic dignity, and even caught some of that rhythmic melody that gives such rare charm to the King James version of the Scriptures.

"As I walked thro the wilderness of this world, I lighted on a certain place where was a Den; and I laid me down in that place to sleep: and as I slept I dreamed a dream."

Thus out of his own experience and shrewd insight into human nature, with the eloquence of an earnest purpose and of a simple, unaffected style, he set forth these picturesque images of what to him were solemn realities; and what had so mightily impressed John Bunyan has been recognized as true by men and women of every class and kind.[1]

Lesser Prose: Richard Baxter, 1615-91; Jeremy Taylor, 1613-67; Thomas Fuller, 1608-61.

Richard Baxter, a clergyman in the Church of England, though in heart and zeal a Puritan, whose religious experience was in some respects like that of Bunyan, was the author of *The Saints' Everlasting Rest* (1649), familiar by title, at least, even to-day. Jeremy Taylor, also a clergyman in the Established Church, a staunch Royalist, was the author of several notable works, of which the best known are his *Rules and Exercises of Holy Living* (1650) and the *Rules and Exercises of Holy Dying* (1651), called "the choicest classics of English devotion." Their author was termed by Coleridge "the most eloquent of divines." "Quaint" Thomas Fuller, like Baxter and Taylor an Episcopal clergyman, was famous for his wit as well as for his wisdom. He wrote many books, including a *Church History of Britain*

[1] See *John Bunyan: His Life, Times, and Work*, by John Brown, Minister of the Church at Bunyan Meeting, Bedford (Houghton, Mifflin and Company). This house also publishes an edition of the *Pilgrim's Progress*, which contains Macaulay's *Essay on Bunyan*.

(1655). It was Fuller who described negroes as "images of God, cut in ebony." He designed an epitaph for himself, "Here lies Fuller's earth."

Most familiar of all the lesser names of this group, and dear to all who delight in the fisherman's craft, is that of Izaak Walton, author of *The Compleat Angler* (1653), a book full of the beauty and crisp freshness of nature, and the influences of a happy, loving character. Lamb said of it: "It breathes the very spirit of innocence, purity, and simplicity of heart. . . . It would sweeten a man's temper at any time to read it; it would Christianize every discordant angry passion."

Izaak Walton, 1593-1683.

In 1651 appeared Hobbes's *Leviathan* (1651), a philosophical treatise upon the State,—a work which had a large influence upon the political ideas of the century. Mention should be made also of two important as well as entertaining literary productions of the Restoration period, the diaries of Pepys (variously pronounced Pĕps, Peeps, and Pips) and Evelyn. Pepys's *Diary* covers the decade of 1659–69. The writer was Secretary of the Admiralty, and was associated with the people prominent in his day. His *Diary* is more personal than that of Evelyn, and is famous for its quaint frankness, which records the most confidential matters with a freedom and flavor that are most amusing. John Evelyn was a wealthy gentleman of Royalist family, and set forth a deal of interesting and valuable material in his *Diary*, which covers the years 1640–1704.

Thomas Hobbes, 1588-1679.

Samuel Pepys, 1633-1703.

John Evelyn, 1620-1706.

During the period which intervened between the death of Milton (1674) and the close of the century, John Dryden held the foremost place in English letters. By no means a great poet, as that

The Age of Dryden.

term is used to-day, Dryden was intellectually great, and great also in the degree of influence which he exerted upon the literature of his generation. In many ways he embodied the spirit of his age, just as Milton embodied the spirit of Puritan England. Dryden belonged to the Restoration, and his compositions are amply characteristic of the temper and teaching of the time. It was the period of French influence, in both morals and art. The demands of form and style were recognized and emphasized as never before. The spirit of the age was philosophical and critical rather than imaginative. Genuine emotion was reckoned vulgar; men reasoned rather than felt; they were skeptical rather than enthusiastic. Infinite pains were spent upon composition, and an elaborately polished style was the object of its writers. The principles of the French critic, Boileau, commended themselves to Dryden and his admirers; and it is Boileau's thought that Dryden has paraphrased in these lines: —

> "Gently make haste, of labor not afraid;
> A hundred times consider what you 've said;
> Polish, repolish, every color lay,
> And sometimes add, but oftener take away."

Instead of glorious bursts of imaginative creation, such as illuminated with unequaled splendor the age of Elizabeth and James, the writers of the new school discussed politics and ethics, developed the *satire* in verse as well as prose, laid the foundation of the modern essay, and established a science of criticism in both art and morals. The age was inevitably prosaic, which is not saying that in the field of thought it was not a prolific or a useful age. In 1671 Isaac Newton had announced his theory of light; he published his *Principia* in 1687. In 1690 appeared Locke's *Essay Concerning the Human Understanding*. These

were epoch-making works; they were not products of an imaginative people, yet they are entirely expressive of the best spirit of that era. The drama was left — the one field of literary art in which the imagination still held sway; and the drama was viciously immoral — the public mirror in which the shamelessness of the English court found as shameless a reflection. Here also, unfortunately for his fame, John Dryden expressed the manners of his age. Among the plays of the Restoration period there are none more gross than some of his. With reference to this quality of the plays Dryden himself said: "I confess my chief endeavors are to delight the age in which I live. If the humor of this be for low comedy, small accidents, and raillery, I will force my genius to obey it, though with more reputation I could write in verse," — an avowal that may explain, although it by no means excuses, the fault. It should be said that this was the only form of literature that had immediate market value, and Dryden was dependent on his pen.

John Dryden, 1631-1700.

John Dryden was born at Aldwinkle, a village in Northamptonshire, August 9, 1631. He studied at Westminster, and became a student of Trinity College, Cambridge, where he took his degree in 1654. He attained no distinction while at the University, and seems not to have cherished much affection for his Alma Mater. When Cromwell died in 1658, Dryden, then twenty-seven years of age, wrote some commonplace verse extolling the virtues of the great Protector, and two years later celebrated the advent of Charles in his poem *Astræa Redux*. This sudden change of sentiment, however, is not altogether derogatory to the poet, for many, even pronounced partisans of Oliver, looked upon the return of the Stuarts as the only road to England's security and peace. In

1663 Dryden began to write plays for the London stage, and signed a contract to supply a stated number annually for a term of years. During this period he wrote twenty-eight plays. His tragedies, or "heroical plays," were better than his comedies, in dramatic merit as well as moral flavor. Of these *The Indian Emperor* (1667) and *The Conquest of Granada* (1672) are notable. In 1666 he produced a very long and somewhat curious poem of 304 four-line stanzas entitled *Annus Mirabilis*, celebrating the English victories over the Dutch fleet, and describing the great fire of London, the most sensational event of this "wonderful year." But Dryden's power was first truly shown in his political satire *Absalom and Achitophel* (1681).

Absalom and Achitophel.

This, the keenest of all political satires and most elegant, was directed against the Earl of Shaftesbury, who had plotted to secure the succession for the Duke of Monmouth. The latter, an illegitimate son of King Charles II., was loved by the king and honored with many titles. Misguided, however, by the earl, Monmouth organized the rebellion which resulted in his downfall. Dryden seized upon the parallelism between the career of this pretender and that of Absalom as recorded in *2 Samuel*, and applies the parallel in remarkable detail. Shaftesbury is Achitophel, Buckingham is Zimri, Cromwell is referred to as Saul, and all the prominent nobles are to be recognized under Jewish names of David's time. For us some of the seriousness of the satire is lost by the presentation of the dissolute monarch as King David, and by the application of the name Bathsheba to the Duchess of Portsmouth, his most notorious mistress. The portraitures of Shaftesbury and Buckingham are unsurpassed, and are often quoted. Of the first Dryden says: —

"A daring pilot in extremity;
Pleased with the danger when the waves ran high
He sought the storms; but for a calm unfit,
Would steer too nigh the sands to boast his wit.
. . . . . .
In friendship false, implacable in hate,
Resolved to ruin or to rule the state."

A second satire, *The Medal*, was directed at Shaftesbury (1682), while *MacFlecknoe* (1682) served to pillory Thomas Shadwell, an inferior poet but a rival, who had replied in satire to *The Medal*.

In 1688 Shadwell succeeded Dryden as poet laureate.

In 1682 Dryden published his *Religio Laici*, or *Layman's Faith*, a defense of the Episcopal Church against both Catholic and Nonconformist. The poem opens with a fine analysis of reason: — Didactic Verse.

"Dim as the borrowed beams of moon."

Five years later the poet had himself turned Catholic, and in the *Hind and the Panther* (1687) defended the claims of Romanism more earnestly than he had argued the former cause. The Church of Rome is figured in the *Milk-White Hind* "immortal and unchanged," while the Church of England is represented by

"The Panther, sure the noblest, next the Hind,
And fairest creature of the spotted kind."

Dryden had been made laureate in 1670. With the advent of William and Mary in 1688, the poet lost his office and his pension, but did not renounce his Catholic creed. Indeed, though Dryden had changed his politics and his religion at times so conspicuously apt as to arouse suspicions of his sincerity, there is reason to believe that in both he was honest. Certainly he did not turn back in the face of positive loss, as did many of his contemporaries who ebbed with the tide.

During the last ten years of the poet's life he employed his talents largely in translation, turning into

brilliantly polished heroic couplets the tales of Ovid and of Homer, the *Satires* of Juvenal and Persius, and the *Æneid* of Vergil entire. Dryden's *Vergil* is one of the great translations; it added much to his fame. He also paraphrased three of Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, — *Palamon and Arcite*, *The Cock and the Fox*, and *The Wife of Bath's Tale*. A study of these rhymed couplets, perfect as they are, with such originals as Chaucer and Vergil, will explain sufficiently why the term *artificial* is applied to the work of Dryden and his school.

Among the minor poems but two are noted, *Alexander's Feast, an Ode in Honor of St. Cecilia's Day* (1697) and *A Song for St. Cecilia's Day* (1687). Both contain some striking examples, frequently quoted, of the correspondence of sound and sense.

Among his contemporaries Dryden's authority was supreme. To them he was "glorious John;" and he held his little court at Will's Coffee-House, where men of letters were accustomed to resort. His influence dominated the literature of the next fifty years, and the rhymed couplet was the established form of English verse until the time of Gray. In his prose Dryden was as brilliant as in verse, and his numerous prefaces and arguments are worthy of a place among our classics.

Of the character of his genius Lowell has this to say in his essay on the poet: "To read him is as bracing as a northwest wind. He blows the mind clear. In mind and manner his foremost quality is energy. In ripeness of mind and bluff heartiness of expression he takes rank with the best. His phrase is always a shortcut to his sense. . . . He had beyond most the gift of the right word.[1]"

[1] Riverside Edition of *Lowell's Works* (Prose), vol. iii. p. 189.

Dryden died May 1, 1700, and was buried with the poets in Westminster Abbey.

The publication of the first part of *Hudibras* in 1663 brought literary fame to Samuel Butler. This long poem, completed in 1678, is a coarse but exceedingly witty burlesque of the Puritan cause and character. Some of its pungent lines are now familiar quotations, the source of which has long been forgotten; for example, —

Samuel Butler, 1612-80.

"He that complies against his will
Is of the same opinion still."

"Look before you ere you leap."

Butler is thought to have taken, as the original of his caricature, the person of Sir Samuel Luke, a stout-hearted, valiant Puritan squire living near Bedford. This gentleman, in whose household Butler was at one time a clerk, commanded the Parliamentary forces raised in that vicinity, and in all probability was the officer under whom John Bunyan performed military service.

A REVIEW OF SEVENTEENTH CENTURY LITERATURE.

The Rulers.	Prose.	Poetry.
James I. (1603–25).	Bacon (1561–1626). *Novum Organum* (1620). Final edition of *Essays* (1625).	Milton (1608–74). *Lycidas* (1637). *Paradise Lost* (1658–65).
Charles I. (1625–49).	Burton (1577–1640). *Anatomy of Melancholy* (1621).	Herbert (1593–1632).
Commonwealth. (1649–60).	Browne (1605–82). *Religio Medici* (1643).	Herrick (1591–1674).
Charles II. (1660–85).	Hobbes's *Leviathan* (1651).	Waller (1605–87).
James II. (1685–88).	Walton's *Compleat Angler* (1653).	Butler (1612–80). *Hudibras* (1663).
William and Mary (1689–1702).	Bunyan (1628–88). *Pilgrim's Progress* (1678).	Dryden (1631–1700). *Absalom and Achitophel* (1681). Laureate (1670–88).

CHAPTER V

THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

FROM ADDISON TO BURNS

I. The Augustan Age of English Prose.
II. The Poetry of Alexander Pope.
III. The Rise of the English Novel.
IV. Essayists of the Second Half.
V. The Romantic Movement in English Poetry.

I. THE AUGUSTAN AGE OF ENGLISH PROSE.

THE general characteristics of English literary and social life at the beginning of the eighteenth century were the natural development of conditions immediately following the period of the Restoration. The influence of John Dryden was a noticeable force in letters throughout the first half of the century. French models, as interpreted by him, and French ideals of literary style were affected by the poets and dramatists who followed in his wake. An unwise attempt to imitate the methods of Greek and Roman classic writers was accompanied by a natural deterioration in originality and in real creative power. Because of these conditions the period is sometimes designated as the Period of French Influence, the poets are described as belonging to the classic school, and their work is often characterized as representing the Artificial age in English verse.

The eighteenth century was an age in which men measured and investigated rather than dreamed, and

while poetry lost much of its spontaneity and imagination, it gained in correctness of form and finish — an element not without value in its later development. On the other hand, the development of English prose during this century is truly remarkable. The easy, graceful style of Steele and Addison, admirably suited to the pleasant narrative form of the essay which they introduced, the terse, incisive keenness of Swift's satire, the elaborate, polished phrase of Johnson's later prose, the clear, adequate English of Hume, the eloquent imagery of Gibbon and Burke — these are features which give distinction to the literature of the eighteenth century, and should be recognized as no inglorious accomplishment. We sometimes speak slightingly of this "age of prose;" but it should be remembered that prose, as truly as verse, is an artistic creation, and that the lucid force of our best English style has been acquired only by stages of growth, in the course of which the achievement of these eighteenth century writers is as essential as it was remarkable. The application to this period of yet another term — that of the Augustan age — is therefore not without appropriate significance.

The Prose.

Perhaps the student has noted already the active participation in public affairs of many of the great writers in preceding centuries; of those prominent in the age of Anne the same is true. The reign of Anne is famous for the growth of party organization and party influence. Ever since the days of the Commonwealth, the people and their popular leaders are recognized as more and more important factors in the disposition of public affairs. Political controversy and party spirit rose higher and higher, but the tone of their expression in literature, while bitter enough in the satires of Swift, was by no means so

Politics.

abusively personal as in those of Dryden; and there was nothing at all corresponding to the brutality exhibited in the literary battles of Puritan and Cavalier. Argument rather than abuse became the weapon of attack; wit superseded malicious vulgarity, and men aimed to be polite — at least in form of expression — even in the heat of debate.

Parties. Royalists and Independents were now distinguished by other party names. Those who supported the old principles of the Stuarts, in behalf of the royal prerogative and the supreme authority of the Established Church, were known as Tories; while those who championed the more liberal policy of constitutional government and maintained the right of dissent were known as Whigs. The Revolution of 1688, which sent James II. into exile and established a Protestant government under William of Orange and Mary, the elder daughter of James, was a victory for the Whigs. In 1702, upon the death of William, who survived his consort by eight years, the succession fell on Anne, second daughter of James. Anne began her reign under Tory influences, which were afterward modified by the vigor of the Whigs. The prosecution of the French campaigns under the leadership of Anne's great general, Marlborough, formed a prolific subject for party contention. The literature of the period is distinctly colored by these events; indeed the allusions are so numerous that much of that literature is unintelligible without a knowledge of the conditions just described.

Morals. The manners of the age were coarse, and moral standards still suffered, at the beginning of the century, from the degrading influences of the period preceding; but the literature of this century is far from being immoral. The frankness and

realism that characterize it should be interpreted in the light of its obvious purpose to inform and to correct. All the essayists were moralists, looking upon life with a pleasant perception of its humors as well as of its frailties. Quite in the spirit of Chaucer they satirized its follies and rebuked its faults. It is a proof of their sincerity that they introduced a respect for virtue and roused society to an appreciation of better things. The new position of woman intellectually is most noteworthy. Literature now paid respect to her interests and tastes. The essays of Addison and Steele were addressed as directly to women as to men, and the first novels of Richardson were planned primarily for their benefit. Before the century closed, women, too, had learned how to write, and had found a place in literature for themselves.

The names of Addison and Steele are naturally associated by reason of their literary partnership in the publication of the *Tatler* and the *Spectator*. They were comrades in their school days; both were, during the same period, pupils in the old Charterhouse School in London, and for three or four years saw each other at Oxford, although not members of the same college. The graceful, polished style of Addison, the genial temper and easy naturalness of Steele — these qualities combined to introduce an entirely new form of composition, which greatly increased the attractive charm of our English prose. To the talents of these two men we owe the beginning of the light, familiar essay.

Joseph Addison, 1672-1719. Richard Steele, 1672-1729.

Joseph Addison was born at Milston, in Wiltshire, the son of the rector, Lancelot Addison, who afterward became Dean of Lichfield. After taking his master's degree at Oxford in 1693, the young

Addison.

man began his literary career with a poem addressed to Dryden; and in the following year published a versified *Account of the Greatest English Poets*, interesting as a youthful essay, in which Dryden is justly praised, Spenser depreciated, and Shakespeare not even mentioned. In 1695 Addison addressed a complimentary poem to King William, which attracted the attention of the Whig leaders and opened the road to a political career by way of literature. Four years thereafter the poet was granted a pension of £300, and, at the suggestion of the Government, went to the Continent to enlarge his experience by travel. Having visited France, Italy, Germany, Austria, and Holland, he returned home in 1703, recalled by the fall of the Whig party at the accession of Anne. A poetical *Letter from Italy*, addressed to Lord Halifax, gave Addison some repute as a poet, and, incidentally, prepared the way for a subsequent and more ambitious effort.

The Campaign.

Through the turn in his fortune caused by the political situation, Addison found himself in extreme financial difficulties. He occupied a garret up three flights of stairs in the Haymarket. But in 1704 occurred the notable victory of Anne's great general, Marlborough, at Blenheim; and in celebration of that victory, Addison, through the good offices of Lord Halifax, was commissioned to prepare an appropriate poem. Thus came his first actual success, *The Campaign*. A particular passage in this poem, exalting the generalship of Marlborough, closed with a comparison which made the poet famous: —

> "So when an angel by divine command,
> With rising tempests shakes the guilty land
> (Such as of late o'er pale Britannia passed),
> Calm and serene he drives the furious blast;
> And, pleased the Almighty's orders to perform,
> Rides in the whirlwind, and directs the storm."

Says Thackeray: —

"Addison left off at a good moment. That simile was pronounced to be of the greatest ever produced in poetry. That angel, that good angel, flew off with Mr. Addison, and landed him in the place of commissioner of appeals — vice Mr. Locke, providentially promoted. In the following year, Mr. Addison went to Hanover with Lord Halifax, and the year after was made under-secretary of state." [1]

Addison's public services were rendered mainly by his pen. He afterward entered Parliament, but on account of diffidence rose to speak but once, and then, without speaking, abruptly sat down again.

Steele.

Richard Steele, in many points the direct opposite of his friend, was born in Dublin, the son of an English attorney, secretary to the lord-lieutenant of Ireland. Left to the care of an uncle by the death of both parents, while Steele was yet a child, he was placed at the Charterhouse School, and sent to the University in 1692. His impulsive temper was exhibited three years later, when he suddenly left Oxford and enlisted as a private in the Horse Guards. He was soon promoted to a captaincy, but resigned his commission, and, through Addison's influence, was appointed official gazetteer, with a salary of £300. Improvident but good-humored and light-hearted, "Dick" Steele, as he is still affectionately called, is one of the universally attractive characters in English literature. It is indicative of his passing moods that while under confinement for dueling in 1701, he wrote a manual of devotion entitled *The Christian Hero*, and when disturbed by the coolness with which his effort was received by his associates, he wrote two or three indifferent comedies to counteract the serious impression. He also gave some time to the search for the "philosopher's

[1] Thackeray, *English Humourists.*

stone." Macaulay, in his *Essay on Addison*, states the case vigorously, but not without truth. Steele, he says,

"was one of those people whom it is impossible either to hate or to respect. His temper was sweet, his affections warm, his spirits lively, his passions strong, and his principles weak. His life was spent in sinning and repenting; in inculcating what was right, and doing what was wrong. In speculation he was a man of piety and honor; in practice he was much of the rake, and a little of the swindler."

Periodical Literature.

In 1709 was launched the enterprise which brought into active expression the characteristic talents of both Steele and Addison. Steele began the publication of the *Tatler*. While the appearance of this little sheet was indeed something of a novelty to readers of that day, Steele's venture was by no means the first in periodical literature. During the period of the Civil War preceding the Commonwealth, the heated controversies of the time gave rise to a large number of weekly publications representing the different sides. In 1663 the Government determined to monopolize the right to publish news, and established a journal called *The Public Intelligencer*, which gave place to *The Oxford Gazette*, and this, in turn, to *The London Gazette* in 1666. The office of gazetteer became a regular ministerial appointment, and it was to the control of this journal that Steele was himself appointed, at Addison's suggestion, in 1705. In 1702 *The Daily Courant* was established. It ran for thirty years, and perhaps deserves the distinction of being the first real newspaper in England. That remarkably industrious and versatile writer, Daniel Defoe, entered the field with his little *Review*[1] in 1704.

[1] See page 268.

This publication was not merely political in its scope, but included news items, articles suggested by them, and occasional essays. There was one department conducted under the head of The Scandalous Club; and

SCENE IN A TYPICAL ENGLISH COFFEE-HOUSE
From the heading of an old Broadside of 1674.

this feature of Defoe's *Review*, together with the es says on themes of popular interest, undoubtedly supplied the hint which brought the *Tatler*, the *Spectator*, and numerous similar publications into the field. At the date when Steele brought out his *Tatler* there were at least a dozen newspapers, so-called, appearing in London regularly on post days, which were Tues-

days, Thursdays, and Saturdays, and half that number published on the alternate days of the week.

The Coffee-Houses.

There was another feature in the social life of this period as intimately related to the essay writing of Steele and Addison as was the existence of this periodical literature; this was the institution of the London coffee-house. In 1652 coffee was first introduced into England as a beverage of common use, and houses of public entertainment where coffee was dispensed became the common places of resort for masculine society. According to one authority there were three thousand coffee-houses in England in 1708, when Steele was beginning to plan for the issue of his little paper. Some of these resorts filled the place of the modern club. In London, men of affairs thronged the coffee-houses daily, so that these became the common exchanges of news, and also of ideas. Among those oftenest mentioned were Garraway's, where tea was first retailed; the Jerusalem, one of the earliest of all the news rooms; Jonathan's, the resort of the brokers in 'Change Alley; Lloyds', the precursor of the noted exchange for marine intelligence, and headquarters for marine insurance at the present day; Tom's, in Cornhill; Dick's, and Will's. At this last-named house it was customary for men of literary tastes and professional men to gather; here John Dryden had occupied the seat of honor in his day, having his chair placed on the balcony in summer, and in winter occupying the warmest nook in the room. Pope was brought thither when a child, that he might at least look on the great man and hear him speak. Swift and Addison, as well as Steele, were frequent guests. Current gossip of the bookshops and the theatres circulated among its stalls. Students from the universities, clergymen in gown and cassock, scribblers of many

ranks, thronged the rooms, blue with tobacco smoke, where they chatted and listened by turns. It was in this very atmosphere that the *Tatler* was born; the tone of easy familiarity, the vivacious wit, the ready omniscience of the coffee-house oracle — all were pleasantly infused by Steele into the pages of his genial *Tatler*, and by both writers into the *Spectator* afterward. Both papers abound in allusions to these resorts. Steele's first number, in outlining the plan of the new periodical, states that

"all accounts of gallantry, pleasure, and entertainment shall be under the article of White's chocolate-house; poetry under that of Will's coffee-house; learning under the title of Grecian [so named because first managed by a Greek]; foreign and domestic news, you will have from St. James's coffee-house [headquarters for the Whigs]; and whatever else I have to offer on any subject shall be dated from my own apartment."

This programme was for some time adhered to in the arrangement of the paper. In his character of the Spectator, Addison has this to say in the first issue of that periodical: —

"There is no place of general resort wherin I do not often make my appearance; sometimes I am seen thrusting my head into a round of politicians at Will's and listening with great attention to the narratives that are made in these little circular audiences. Sometimes I smoke a pipe at Childs', and while I seem attentive to nothing but *The Postman*,[1] overhear the conversation of every table in the room. I appear on Tuesday night at St. James's coffee-house, and sometimes join the little committee of politics in the inner room, as one who comes to hear and improve. My face is likewise very well known at the Grecian, the Cocoa-tree, and in the theatres both of Drury Lane and the Haymarket. I

[1] Title of a newspaper. Compare Thackeray on these periodicals in his *English Humourists*.

have been taken for a merchant upon the Exchange for above these two years; and sometimes pass for a Jew in the assembly of stock-jobbers at Jonathan's."

The Tatler.

Having reviewed thus the conditions so favorable to the new experiment, it is easy to see how the conception of that famous little sheet, the *Tatler*, developed in the sanguine mind of Richard Steele. Humor was an element which had not yet appeared — intentionally — in the publications then current; but Dick Steele was a humorist of genuine and happy type. In the first issue of his paper the spirit of his genial, lively nature found prompt expression, and to the pervasive presence of this agreeable quality must we assign in part the immediate popularity of his enterprise. Something of a serious purpose is also avowed by the author in the dedication of the first completed volume: —

"The general purpose of this Paper is to expose the false arts of life, to pull off the disguises of cunning vanity and affectation, and to recommend a general simplicity in our dress, our discourse, and our behavior."

The *Tatler* appeared on post days, three times a week; the sheet was small, and sold for a penny; the first number was issued April 12, 1709, the last, January 2, 1711. Contributions were accepted from various writers, some of whom were not identified until the publication of the final volume. Addison, who detected the personality of Steele on reading the sixth number, contributed forty-one of the papers, and, in conjunction with his friend, wrote thirty-four others; but of the 271 *Tatlers* 188 were written by Steele.

Two months after the cessation of the *Tatler* Steele was ready with a new venture, and March 1, 1711, he issued the first *Spectator*. In this publication Joseph

Addison soon became the dominant spirit, and with the essays published in this most famous of the literary periodicals his fame as an English writer is most closely connected. He wrote 274 of the 555 numbers which composed the first series, and twenty-four of the second series, which appeared in 1714. Of the 635 numbers included in both the first and second *Spectator*, Steele produced 240. The Spectator.

The famous "Club," which forms the most important feature of the periodical, was originated by Steele; but Addison so elaborated and appropriated the characters of its members, particularly that of *Sir Roger de Coverley*, the amiable country squire, that this portion of the work is justly attributed to him.

The success of the *Spectator* surpassed that of its predecessor. There was no attempt to furnish the news; each number contained a finished essay. In the tenth number the Spectator declares, in his own character: —

"The mind that lies fallow but a single day sprouts up in follies that are only to be killed by a constant and assiduous culture. It was said of Socrates that he brought Philosophy down from heaven to inhabit among men; and I shall be ambitious to have it said of me that I have brought Philosophy out of closets and libraries, schools and colleges, to dwell in clubs and assemblies, at tea-tables and in coffee-houses."

That the hopes of the essayist were not disappointed may be inferred from the following letter, printed in Number 92 of the periodical: —

"Mr. Spectator, — Your paper is a part of my tea-equipage; and my servant knows my humor so well that, in calling for my breakfast this morning (it being past my usual hour), she answered the *Spectator* was not yet come in, but the tea-kettle boiled, and she expected it every moment."[1]

[1] This was a genuine communication from a Miss Shepherd.

The statement has been made that the paper reached a circulation of 10,000 copies; upon some special occasions this may very possibly have been true.

Cato.

In 1713 Addison's tragedy of *Cato* was produced with notable success. Contemporary critics were extravagant in its praise. Pope wrote a prologue; Swift, with whom Addison had been on hostile terms owing to party antagonism, joined in the general congratulation. *Cato* was translated into French, Italian, German, and even into Latin. Voltaire called it "the first reasonable English tragedy." Yet Addison's drama is an artificial work, formal, passionless; it embodies the prosaic spirit of the time and does not rise above the rules of art which that age deemed correct. It is classic in form as in subject and follows strictly the law of the unities. It is highly rhetorical and lofty in tone. Cato's soliloquy, beginning

> "It must be so — Plato, thou reasonest well! —
> Else whence this pleasing hope, this fond desire,
> This longing after immortality?"

is a familiar passage introducing a really impressive scene.

Closing Years.

Addison's marriage with the Countess of Warwick in 1716 was followed by further political advancement. He became Secretary of State in 1717, retiring with a pension of £1500 in the following year. Unhappily, political differences, aggravated by Steele's carelessness in money obligations, induced a quarrel between these old-time friends which was never healed. Steele in *The Plebeian*, and Addison in *The Old Whig*, engaged in a stormy controversy, which was ended by the death of Addison in 1719. Steele continued to busy himself with various journalistic schemes, largely of a partisan character, establishing successively

The Englishman, *The Reader*, *The Plebeian*, and *The Theatre*. He had quarreled with Swift, had obtained and lost a seat in Parliament, held some minor offices under George I., again entered Parliament, and continued writing till his death in 1729.

The influence of these two essayists was not confined to literary form; both were moralists in purpose, as we have seen, and Addison, particularly, infused a spirit of clean and wholesome morality into the literature of the century.

Suggestions for the Study of Addison's Prose.

The naturalness of Addison's expression is its most conspicuous quality. He seems to have written just as he would have spoken; and Pope declared that his conversation had something in it more charming than he had found in that of any other man.[1] Addison's vocabulary should be noted, particularly the use of familiar and common terms. In examining the sentence form it would be well to get the proportion, approximately, of sentences which have a loose structure and those which are periodic. The directness of the style is noticeable; he advances to his point without deviation, and never goes out of his way to secure a fine effect. Compare Addison's prose with that of Bacon, noting the different degrees of brevity, and the manner which characterizes each.

In the study of Addison, however, the important point is to find the personal quality, the individuality, of the man, which is of more value than the elements which make up the Addisonian style. His humor and his wit should be studied to see whether his satire is bitter or sharp. Is his tone cynical, or does it voice a spirit in sympathetic touch with his fellows? A comparison has been sometimes drawn between Addison and Steele to the advantage of the latter in this respect.

In his reading the student will naturally turn to those familiar sketches of the Club which are chiefly occupied with

[1] Spence's *Anecdotes*.

the history and portraiture of attractive old Sir Roger. The reader should ascertain the reasons for the creation of this, and the other lesser characters. What purpose are they intended to fulfill? The essay contained in the second *Spectator* will make clear the general plan, as Steele designed it; and the fourth *Spectator* shows us Addison's introduction of the characters in a typical debate. The portrait of Sir Roger deserves careful study, for it represents outside the drama the first actual accomplishment in the delineation of real character drawn direct from English life.

The student should become acquainted with other of Addison's essays besides those contained in this attractive group. Macaulay suggests the reading, at one sitting, of the two *Visits to Westminster Abbey*, the *Visit to the Exchange*, the *Journal of the Retired Citizen*, the *Vision of Mirza*, the *Transmigrations of Pug the Monkey*, and the *Death of Sir Roger de Coverley*. To these should be added several of the papers which deal with some of the trifling follies of fashion and manners, such as *The Fine Lady's Journal*, *Party Patches*, *The Exercise of the Fan*, and *Household Superstitions*. Nor should we omit altogether the critical essays, like that upon *Chevy Chase*, and the essays on *Milton*. A convenient edition of the *Sir Roger de Coverley Papers* will be found in Numbers 60, 61, of the *Riverside Literature Series* (Houghton, Mifflin and Company). Macaulay's *Essay on Addison* is a classic, and Thackeray's portraits of both Addison and Steele in his *English Humourists* are most vivacious studies of these men and their age. Chapters upon the so-called newspapers of that day, and upon the coffee-houses and clubs, will be found in Courthope's *Life of Addison*, in *English Men of Letters Series*, and in W. C. Sydney's *England and the English in the Eighteenth Century* (Macmillan). Johnson's *Addison*, in his *Lives of the Poets*, is interesting; and the brief essay introducing the volume of selections from Addison, edited by J. R. Green (Macmillan), is particularly valuable. Upon the life of Steele the biography by G. A. Aitken is authority. Austin Dobson's *Life of Steele*, in the *English Worthies Series*, is

a good, brief biography. A careful reading of Thackeray's great novel, *Henry Esmond*, will prove as profitable as it will be entertaining; no more vivid picture of this period in English history has ever been produced.

Jonathan Swift is the foremost English satirist in prose. It is no easy matter to arrive at a just interpretation of this man's character. One of the keenest of wits, he was for the first thirty years of the eighteenth century the intellectual master of his age. Although his remarkable talents received scant recognition from those in power, his influence in moulding public opinion was extraordinary; and for a brief period he appears a conspicuous figure among the party leaders whose measures he supported by the sharpness and vigor of his pen. Imperious, caustic, at times brutal, in the strenuous expression of his views, he domineered over friends and foes. In the height of his success in London he once sent the Lord Treasurer into the House of Commons to call out the principal Secretary of State in order to say that he would not dine with him if he intended to dine late. He warned Lord Bolingbroke, the head of the Tory government, not to appear cold to him, for he would not be treated like a schoolboy. "If we let these great ministers pretend too much," he says, "there will be no governing them." Yet the life of Dean Swift was embittered by disappointment and clouded with melancholy. Early in life he felt the premonitions of brain disease, and foretold the mental decay in the gloom of which his great genius was to expire. "I shall die like that," he said once, while walking with the poet Young, pointing to a tree whose branches were dead at the top. To the subtle working of disease we must attribute some of the

Jonathan Swift, 1667-1745.

eccentricities of Jonathan Swift; to that, too, in part, the terrible cynicism with which he looked on humanity at large.

Early Difficulties.

Swift was born in Dublin, of English parentage. His father, who had held some minor clerkship, was already dead when his son was born, and there was scarcely the barest provision for the family support. For many years Mrs. Swift was dependent on her brother-in-law, Godwin Swift, under whose direction and by whose aid Jonathan was sent to school at Kilkenny, where he had for a school fellow William Congreve, afterward the most popular play-writer of that generation; and then to Trinity College, Dublin, later the college of Goldsmith and Burke. During his youth Swift led a rather wild and stormy life, neglecting his courses at will, although, independently of his curriculum, he read widely in history and literature. In 1686 he was given a degree "by special favor." Disappointed and vexed at his mishaps, Swift always recurred to this experience with bitterness; for his uncle's assistance he expressed only sarcastic contempt.

A Dependent in England.

In 1688, the year of the Revolution, Swift came of necessity to England, and soon found employment with Sir William Temple, a kinsman, who had retired after a distinguished public career and was living at Moor Park in Surrey.[1] As a member of Temple's household this proud and morbidly self-conscious youth again found himself dependent on the generosity of a patron, occupying a position somewhat above that of a servant, and subject to conditions exasperating to one of his temperament and gifts. As Sir William's secretary, however, he enjoyed many advantages; there was time for study, and his

[1] See Macaulay's *Essay on Sir William Temple.*

failure at the University was now largely redeemed.[1] Here, also, was opportunity to observe the methods of party policy and leadership, with favorable introduction to the men most prominent in affairs of state. King William himself took note of the young man, and made promises of advancement which, unhappily, were never fulfilled.

Swift as a Churchman.

Upon the death of Temple in 1699, Jonathan Swift went back to Ireland as secretary to the Earl of Berkeley, the lord deputy. The year after he accepted the Church living of Laracor, which he retained for ten years. Swift had taken Church orders in 1694, and however unfortunate his choice of a profession may appear, — a profession for which both by temper and talents he would seem to have been singularly disqualified, — we do not find him at this period or later disregarding his duties or slighting his obligations to the Church. In 1701 he went to England on ecclesiastical business at the instance of the Bishop of Dublin; and during the years 1701–10 was able to divide his time between Laracor and London, so that about half of each year was passed in a society far more congenial to his active, vigorous mind than that afforded by an Irish vicarage.

The First Satires.

When Swift appeared thus in London, his name was not unknown to that circle of scholars and politicians, professional men and wits, who gossiped at the coffee-houses, where Congreve, the dramatist, Matthew Prior, the poet, Dick Steele, editor of *The Gazette*, and the dignified, rather reticent Mr. Addison, now rapidly advancing in the good graces of the Whigs, were among the most brilliant of the lit-

[1] Swift received the master's degree in 1692 from Oxford, and in 1701 that of LL. D. from Dublin.

erary group; for this capable representative of the Irish Church was generally known to be the author of two pamphlets which had already brought him no small fame, in spite of the fact that they had circulated anonymously and were not published until 1704. These were his two satires *The Tale of a Tub* and *The Battle of the Books*. The first was written in 1696. Although the first of Swift's serious efforts, it remains not only the most perfect of his essays, but stands as perhaps the best example of the prose satire in English. Its whimsical title is explained in the preface by reference to the fact "that seamen have a custom, when they meet a whale, to fling him out an empty tub by way of amusement, to divert him from laying violent hands upon the ship." The ship, in this case, may stand for the Government, including the two-fold relations of Church and State; and this pamphlet is tossed out to those who are hostile to religion and government, in order to divert their attacks. In this satire occurs the famous parable of Peter, Martin, and Jack (typifying the Roman Church, the Church of the Reformation, and the Calvinists), who inherit coats, exactly of one pattern, with specific directions as to how they shall be worn. The manner in which these three sons succeed in evading the terms of their father's will is described with blunt vigor and much picturesque wit. So strong is the satire, and so bold the handling of themes more or less sacred, that charges of irreverence and even of blasphemy were laid against the daring young writer, and Swift's subsequent failure to reach the higher preferments of the Church may be attributed to his authorship of this tract. The work did, however, give him immediate standing among the strongest writers of the day.

The Battle of the Books was a slighter effort, bright

and spirited and distinctly humorous in tone. Sir William Temple had become involved in a protracted discussion over the comparative merits of ancient and modern literature, and into this not very dignified squabble his keen-witted secretary (it was in 1696–97) injected the humor of his burlesque. The satire supplies a mock-heroic narrative of the encounter and disasters which occur in a desperate battle fought between the ancient and the modern books. Sir William's enemies are utterly destroyed, the two most conspicuous champions being neatly spitted together on a single lance.

Bickerstaff.

With Addison and Steele, Swift was for several years more or less closely associated, although he afterward quarreled with both. He contributed papers to the *Tatler*, and himself originated the character of *Isaac Bickerstaff*, which Steele assumed when he launched that paper upon its pleasant career. Among the petty superstitions which were then prevalent, against which much of the mild satire of Addison and Steele was subsequently directed, was a vulgar belief in the assumptions of astrology; and one of the more prominent quacks of the day, who lived upon the ignorance and folly of the common people, was a so-called astrologer by the name of Partridge. In 1707 Swift published, under the name of *Bickerstaff*, certain predictions for the ensuing year, among which he foretold the death of Partridge upon a date which he fixed by the formulæ of the science itself. Although the victim of the joke protested that he was still alive after the date fixed for his demise, *Bickerstaff* proved publicly that he must be dead; and other humorists supported the assertion so effectively that the would-be astrologer was fairly laughed out of business if not out of existence. The circumstance

gave such prominence to the name of *Isaac Bickerstaff* that Steele was glad, as a matter of advantage, to appropriate it to his own use.

The Politician.

But Swift's activity was employed in other and more serious directions than in the mere play of his wit. He had a genius for politics; was probably the great political genius of his time. From the Whigs, with whose party successes Addison's advancement had been so closely associated, he never received that recognition which his abilities deserved, and their indifference to his talents drove him out of that party in disgust. In 1710 the Tories again came into power; Swift was cordially welcomed to their council, and the period of his prominent participation in national politics begins. For eight months he conducted *The Examiner*, a weekly series of political essays wholly the work of his own pen. In 1711 he prepared a pamphlet on *The Conduct of the Allies*, his strongest political paper. Swift was now urging his claims on the Government, but not until 1713 did he receive his tardy promotion to the not very desirable office of Dean of St. Patrick's in Dublin — the highest appointment he ever attained. Following the accession of George I. in 1714, and the downfall of the Tory cabinet, his public career was closed; in thoroughly pessimistic mood he returned once more to Ireland and settled down to his estate, nursing his grievances and quick to arraign the blunders of those now in power.

The Journal to Stella.

Along with the numerous pamphlets and articles devoted to party affairs and Church interests in Ireland, we owe to this period of London residence a volume of rare interest; this is the series of letters comprised in Swift's *Journal to Stella*. Esther Johnson was a young woman in the Temple household, almost a child when Swift was filling

his position of secretary to Sir William. He had directed her studies at that time; although many years his junior, her personality had greatly attracted him, and after the death of their common patron their intimacy continued. The relations between this bright, talented girl and the brilliant, imperious genius to whom she was devoted are not fully known. There is a tradition that they were married, but there is no evidence of such an event, which is unlikely. Of their mutual affection there is no doubt. It throws a softer light upon the inner life of this singular man to know that after his death there was found among his papers a little package inscribed "only a woman's hair;" the lock thus treasured was Stella's.

The correspondence itself is an actual diary of Swift's life during the years 1710–13; and in these letters an entirely new phase of his personality is shown. Not only are the daily experiences, trivial as well as notable, vividly recounted; the meetings with prominent persons, the intercourse with great men of which he was so proud; the influence he exerted, the flattery paid to his own talents, the gossip of coffee-house and club, of cabinet and parlor: not only does he draw deft portraitures of all the great lions, — than whom none roars more impressively than the great Dean himself, — but here Swift lays aside, for the only time in his career as a writer, the mask of mockery which he assumes in every other public expression of his thought. In playful, affectionate terms he writes to this woman as a parent might write to a child, using the "little language" of a jocular tenderness which employs abbreviations and resorts to a cipher code. This *Journal* gives us an invaluable reproduction of the men and manners of that age; it also gives us almost our only glimpse of the real heart of Jonathan Swift.

The Drapier Letters.

After his return to Ireland in 1714, the Dean interested himself more and more in Irish affairs, and not infrequently expressed his mind in some vigorous tract, always anonymously and almost always with that terrible irony so characteristic of his style that his identity was easily guessed. The most notable of the Irish papers are *The Drapier Letters*, published in 1724. This series of papers was inspired by an act of Government licensing an English speculator to coin copper half-pence for circulation in Ireland, where coins of small denomination were much needed in trade. The terms of the patent sanctioned what seemed to be a gross robbery of the Irish people, and aroused an indignant resistance. In the midst of the transaction Swift, anonymously, published these pamphlets, signed "M. B., drapier," and addressed to "the tradesmen, shopkeepers, farmers, and country people in general of the kingdom of Ireland." Shrewdly impersonating the character of a plain Dublin draper, the author assailed the scheme, arguing the ruin of Ireland if the plan were adopted. There were four of the letters, and their effect was immediate. Not only did the Government recall the contract, but Swift himself, when identified as the writer of the *Letters*, became a popular hero among the Irish people.

Gulliver's Travels.

It is as the author of *Gulliver* that Jonathan Swift is best known to the world, — a work so singular in its purpose and so distinct in literary method that it stands by itself in literature, like the *Utopia* of Sir Thomas More and the *Pilgrim's Progress* of John Bunyan. The *Travels* consists of the narrative of Lemuel Gulliver, first a surgeon, and then a captain of several ships, who, in four remarkable voyages, discovers the island-empire of Lilliput, the country of the Brobdingnagians, the flying kingdom of

Laputa, and the disagreeable land of the Houyhnhnms.[1] The first of these narratives is exceedingly amusing; here the discoverer sojourns among the little people, who attain a stature of six inches; their houses, furniture, domestic animals, forests, fruits, and grains are all in due proportion to the size of the inhabitants. In the land of Brobdingnag these proportions are exactly reversed; the grass grows twenty feet in height, the hedges are at least one hundred and twenty feet tall, while the trees are too lofty to be measured. Here Gulliver, the man-mountain, as the Lilliputians termed him, is studied like an insect by his new captors, with the aid of a magnifying glass. In the third *voyage* the satire grows more pointed. The court of Laputa is composed of musicians and scientists, who live wholly in the air; their feet never touch the earth, their heads are in the clouds, and naturally, their minds are usually befogged. Adepts in music and mathematics, they participate in the harmony of the spheres and express their ideas in lines and figures. Their tailors take their measure by quadrant and compasses, but as mistakes are frequent, their clothes are ill-made and fit poorly. In their royal university of Lagado philosophers are at work on all manner of absurd problems: one is engaged in extracting sunbeams from cucumbers; another is designing a method for building houses by first constructing the roof; the projector of speculative learning is busy with a device for compiling a complete body of all arts and sciences, through the means of a machine which shifts about a great number of little blocks, each inscribed with a single word, and is operated by turning a crank. It is, however, in the fourth and final section of his work that Swift's satire

[1] This apparently unpronounceable name is suggested by the *whinny* of the horse and is pronounced *whinnems*.

finds its most savage and virulent expression. The last *voyage* discovers a land where the horses are endowed with reason, while the Yahoos, a race of repulsive creatures resembling human beings in form, are characterized by the most degrading and disgusting traits conceivable in brutes. Here the cynicism and misanthropy of the satire are overwhelming. The experiences of Gulliver among the tiny Lilliputians, and his adventures among the good-natured giants of Brobdingnag, may be read with amusement; the observations chronicled upon the unpractical philosophers of Laputa and Lagado provoke our admiration through the very sharpness of their caustic yet truthful touch: but this last narrative is intolerable. It gives a fresh significance to a line in one of Swift's letters to Pope — "but principally I hate and detest that animal called man!" And yet such is the smoothness of his diction and the marvelous realism of his fiction, that Swift's *Gulliver* has for generations been the delight of children, who have found in the rich imagination of the story all the fascination of a fairy tale.

The Spirit of the Satirist.

While we give such prominence to the satires of Swift, we must not forget what an important place was filled by the satire in the literature of that age. If Dean Swift was the greatest of the satirists, all of his contemporaries in letters were satirists each in his degree. Two writers of the Restoration period, Butler and Dryden, had not only established their fame by the use of satire in their verse, but they had also established that form of literature in popular favor. The influence of literary fashions in France, and the revival of interest in the Latin classics, confirmed this popularity among scholars of all departments; both prose writers and writers of verse were devoted to the composition of satires, and the spirit of

the time found no more characteristic expression than through this form of literary art.

Just before leaving England to enter upon his duties as Dean of St. Patrick's, Swift had joined with three distinguished contemporaries, Alexander Pope, John Gay, and John Arbuthnot, in an agreement to produce a series of satires upon the follies of men. This was the genesis of the Scriblerus Club, and Arbuthnot's once famous work, *The Memoirs of Martinus Scriblerus*, was one outcome of this undertaking. Pope's *Epistles* and Swift's *Gulliver* were at least in keeping with the purpose of this association.

Last Years.

The end of Swift's story is sad enough. Stella had died in 1728, and the shadow of his own infirmity gradually developed until his once brilliant mind was hopelessly clouded. "It is time for me to have done with the world," he wrote to Bolingbroke; "and so I would, if I could, get into a better before I was called into the best, and not die here in a rage, like a poisoned rat in a hole." There were periods when he was violently insane; at other times he appeared sunk in a state of lethargy. He died October 19, 1745, and was buried in his own cathedral church of St. Patrick's, where, in accordance with his request, his body was placed by the side of Stella. His fortune, amounting to £12,000, he bequeathed to establish an asylum for the insane; and upon this foundation St. Patrick's Hospital was opened in 1757.

"An immense genius," says Thackeray; "an awful downfall and ruin. So great a man he seems to me, that thinking of him is like thinking of an empire falling. We have other great names to mention — none, I think, however, so great or so gloomy."

Thackeray's picture of Swift's career is perhaps too

dark. It was Swift's misfortune to view the world cynically; to observe its follies and its crimes distorted to extravagant proportions. It was his weakness that he should have devoted his splendid energies to the uses of ridicule and scorn rather than to the expression of sympathy, encouragement, and faith; yet it is a superficial judgment which reports of Jonathan Swift as merely the misanthropic censor of his race: the record of his literary life is a record of vigorous, outspoken defiance against incompetence and sham; his motives are not those of a petty quarrelsome nature; they are, for the most part, inspired by the discovery of some abuse, or the threatened injustice of a tyrannous power. If he appears inordinately ambitious for influence, it was to wield it for others' good, not to possess it for himself.

Bibliography. Read Thackeray on *Swift*, in *English Humourists*, and Johnson's *Life* in his *Lives of the Poets*. Leslie Stephen is the author of the biography in the *English Men of Letters Series*. Henry Morley has edited an excellent edition of *Gulliver's Travels* in the *Carisbrooke Library* (Routledge, London). Another volume of this *Library* includes a number of the minor writings. *The Tale of a Tub* is given entire, together with other essays, in a volume of the *Camelot Series* (W. Scott, London). *Selections from Swift*, edited by F. C. Prescott, is published by H. Holt, and another volume of selections, edited by C. T. Winchester, is published by Ginn and Company. The *Little Masterpieces Series*, edited by Bliss Perry (Doubleday, Page and Company), contains a volume of selections from characteristic papers. Sir Walter Scott edited the *Works* of Swift, together with a valuable *Memoir*. The *Prose Works* have been edited recently by Temple Scott (George Bell, London).

II. THE POETRY OF ALEXANDER POPE.

Alexander Pope, 1688-1744.

The great representative poet in this age of prose was Alexander Pope. He was the legitimate successor of Dryden, for whom his admiration was intense even as a child, and whose polished form of composition, developed to a wonderful perfection, Pope made the model of English verse for more than half a century. While incapable of great variety in either the spirit or the expression of ideas, his mind was extraordinarily brilliant in its aptness for epigram and in its use of satire, the inevitable instrument of literary genius in his day. It is no less characteristic of his time than of his own peculiar talents that Pope's most distinctive works are didactic compositions entitled *Essays*, or satirical poems upon manners, morals, and literary themes. He rarely introduced any other metre than that of the *heroic couplet*, which he handled with a facile art which makes him the undisputed master of that particular verse form. No other English writer except Shakespeare has produced so many lines which have found a permanent and familiar place in our literature. Yet Pope's defects are as notable as his excellences. He has no true perception of the realities of nature, no power to paint her beauty or her grandeur, much less to interpret her teaching or her mysteries; he never rises to the heights of human passion; he brings no message of profound importance to the world. Like his great contemporaries in prose he ridicules the stupidity of men and speculates in philosophy and ethics. Pope's place in literature is, however, one of high distinction; he adequately voiced the mind of his age in verse, and as a representative of the purely literary life he is the most commanding figure not only of his age, but of the entire century.

Alexander Pope was born in London, May 21, 1688.

His Boyhood.

His father, a wealthy linen draper, was a Catholic, and, in common with the followers of that creed, suffered from the intolerance of the time. Owing to the bitter feeling engendered by the Revolution, and childish fears of Jacobite uprisings, Catholics were subjected to great annoyance and deprived of many natural privileges and rights. Their children were not admitted to the public schools. The poet's training was unsystematic; he studied with various tutors, but mainly by himself. He was a precocious child, and at a very tender age showed some ability in making verse. His own words are: —

> "While yet a child, nor yet a fool to fame,
> I lisped in numbers, for the numbers came."

Homer and Ovid were his delight, although he knew these classics better through translations than in the original. The English poets Waller and Spenser, above all Dryden, especially impressed him. Before he was fifteen years of age he undertook to write an epic poem with the title of *Alcander, Prince of Rhodes*, of which one couplet remains extant: —

> "Shields, helms, and swords all jangle as they hang,
> And sound formidinous with angry clang."

In the year following the poet's birth his father had removed to Binfield, a small town not far from Windsor and on the border of the famous forest; here the poet's childhood was passed, except for a period of two or three years when he was sent to London to study French. It was at this time, when he was perhaps ten years old, that Pope got his glimpse of the great Mr. Dryden. *Vergilium tantum vidi* he wrote in his record of that memorable day when, at his own importunate request, he was taken by some friend to Will's Coffee-House, and gazed at the first poet of the time as

he sat in his accustomed chair. It was not long afterward that William Walsh, a critic of some authority, gave the young verse maker his famous word of counsel. "Be correct," said he; "we have had great poets, but never one great poet that was correct."

Pope's earliest productions worthy of note are his *Pastorals*, published in 1709, but written, according to his own account, when he was only sixteen years old. These compositions may be regarded as the exercises of a schoolboy practicing the metrical art, but they prove the possession of unusual gifts. The classical spirit dominates; they are eclogues after the Vergilian model. They are four in number, one for each of the four seasons, and suggest the influence of Spenser, whose *Shepherd's Calendar* they somewhat resemble. Early Poems.

The poem *Windsor Forest*, the direct product of the young poet's environment, appeared in 1713. Here again the machinery is altogether classical.

> "Not proud Olympus yields a nobler sight, . .
> Tho' Gods assembled grace his towering height,
> Than what more humble mountains offer here,
> Where, in their blessings, all those Gods appear.
> See Pan with flocks, with fruits Pomona crown'd,
> Here blushing Flora paints th' enamel'd ground,
> Here Ceres' gifts in waving prospect stand,
> And nodding, tempt the joyful reaper's hand;
> Rich Industry sits smiling on the plains,
> And peace and plenty tell a *Stuart* reigns."

Such a mingling of Roman mythology with modern English history cannot fail to be incongruous, but its absurdity was not generally felt in Pope's era. So Diana with her buskined nymphs is allowed to stray unchallenged over the dewy lawns of Windsor; the Muses sport on Cooper's Hill; great Scipio, Atticus, and Sir William Trumbull are celebrated impartially in the same couplet.

The Essay on Criticism.

Of more distinguished merit than these poems is the *Essay on Criticism*, which falls chronologically between the compositions just described. It was written when Pope was but twenty-one, and published in 1711. In this brilliantly phrased *Essay* Pope covers, superficially, the entire field of contemporary criticism. He offers nothing new; there is no particular originality in the thought. His material is absorbed largely from the writings of Boileau and Bossu, representing the canons of French taste which had been accepted by Dryden and his school. These doctrines are reënunciated by Pope, combined with the common truisms of literary art. In the phrasing and the form which he gave to these ideas, however, there was a freshness and finish, a wonderful aptness and brilliancy of style which were entirely novel and remarkably impressive. On all sides the work was praised. The French critics conceded that at last a composition of merit had been produced by an English writer; and Pope was welcomed by his contemporaries as a rising genius. The diction of this poem is especially admirable for its terseness and elegance; the compact form of the couplet lends itself easily to epigram, and Pope's witty lines, sometimes singly, sometimes in pairs, quickly found a place in the literature of familiar quotation.

> "Blunt truths more mischief than nice falsehoods do."
> "For fools rush in where angels fear to tread."
> "To err is human, to forgive divine."
> "A little learning is a dangerous thing;
> Drink deep or taste not the Pierian spring."

Such passages, lavishly scattered through this essay, illustrate the choice use of words, the strong antithesis, and the generally epigrammatic character of Pope's distinctive style.

The serious teaching of the poem is that nature is the only standard by which to judge an author's work : —

> " First follow Nature and your judgment frame
> By her just standard, which is still the same."

But, says the poet, study nature as interpreted by the rules of classic art : —

> " Those rules of old discovered, not devised,
> Are Nature still, but Nature methodised.
> . . . . . .
> Hear how learned Greece her useful rules indites,
> When to repress and when indulge her flights.
> . . . . . .
> Be Homer's works your study and delight —
> Read them by day, and meditate by night ;
> Thence form your judgment, thence your maxims bring,
> And trace the Muses upward to their spring."

This is a fair expression of Pope's artistic creed ; he followed it consistently to the end, and in his devotion to the classic model — which, unfortunately, he viewed not directly, but through translation — he imposed upon English poetry qualities which justify the use of the epithet *artificial*, now generally applied to his own work and that of his school.

The Rape of the Lock.

In 1714 appeared the *Rape of the Lock*, Pope's most brilliant achievement during this first period of his career. This composition is esteemed as the finest example of the mock-heroic in English verse — a humorous epic, half satire, half burlesque. The basis of the poem is an adventure of trivial character : a young nobleman, Lord Petre, had given offense to a Miss Fermor by stealing a lock of her hair ; and out of this lover's quarrel developed Pope's sparkling verse. No more vivacious trifle exists in literature ; wit, fancy, elegant diction, have here wrought to produce a masterpiece of the airiest type — " the most exquisite specimen of filigree work ever in-

vented."[1] No better example of the *artificial* style can be found than in this poem as a whole. Coffee is prepared for the entertainment of guests, and thus does Pope describe the process of its preparation: —

> "For lo, the Board with cups and spoons is crowned,
> The berries crackle, and the mill turns round;
> On shining altars of Japan they raise
> The silver lamp; the fiery spirits blaze;
> From silver spouts the grateful liquors glide,
> While China's earth receives the smoking tide."

The climax of humorous fancy is reached in the account of the actual clipping of the lock and the disaster which befalls an attendant sylph who tries in vain to defend the heroine from loss.

Two other compositions of this period, the *Elegy to the Memory of an Unfortunate Lady* and the *Epistle of Eloise to Abelard* (1717), have been classed justly as rhetorical poems.[2] In the one last named Pope came as near as was possible for him to the expression of human passion; but his deficiencies in this field are painfully evident. Passion of any kind lay outside the experience of this generation, and literary talent of the age made little attempt to reach its heights; when Pope aspired to be dramatic, he produced only fervid declamation.

Pope's Translation of Homer.

In the early part of 1713 the poet first met Jonathan Swift, and a friendship was begun which, unlike most of Pope's friendships with contemporary men of letters, was unmarred by petty quarrels, and continued unbroken till the death of the poet in 1744. There is an interesting account by Bishop Kennett which describes a scene in the antechamber of a Secretary of State. The room is crowded with men of note who are waiting for an audience.

[1] William Hazlitt. [2] Leslie Stephen.

The great satirist is the most conspicuous figure, bustling about, imparting advice, promising assistance to this and that cause, whispering in the ear of one great man, browbeating another; all at once he is heard to declare that the greatest poet in England, Mr. Pope, a Papist, has begun a translation of Homer, for which subscriptions must be forthcoming; "for," says he, "the author shall not begin to print till I have a thousand guineas for him." The first volume of Pope's *Iliad* appeared in 1715, the sixth and last volume in 1720. This translation of the *Iliad* is commonly regarded as Pope's greatest work, but its merit does not lie in its faithfulness to the original; many of Pope's contemporaries conceded that. Richard Bentley, scholar and writer, declared in a phrase much quoted, that it is "a pretty poem, Mr. Pope, but you must not call it Homer." Although the spirit of the Greek poet is absent in Pope's version of the epic, the translation is, nevertheless, a masterpiece; one critic[1] cites the following passage as unsurpassed for finished versification in English poetry: —

> "The troops exulting, sat in order round,
> And beaming fires illumined all the ground.
> As when the moon, refulgent lamp of night,
> O'er Heaven's clear azure spreads her sacred light,
> When not a breath disturbs the deep serene,
> And not a cloud o'ercasts the solemn scene;
> Around her throne the vivid planets roll,
> And stars unnumbered gild the glowing pole,
> O'er the dark trees a yellower verdure shed,
> And tip with silver every mountain's head."

In this description Pope rises to his highest reach of power; but, truly, his verses are not Homer.

Strangely enough for one attempting such a task, Pope was practically ignorant of Greek. His "trans-

[1] Mark Pattison.

lation" is based entirely on other renderings, French and English. When he undertook the *Odyssey*, the poet secured the assistance of two Cambridge scholars, Browne and Fenton, who performed at least half the work. So artificial, indeed so mechanical, is the style of Pope that these minor writers were able to imitate his versification perfectly. There is no better evidence than this of the truth expressed in Cowper's couplet upon the poets of his time, who

> "made poetry a mere mechanic art,
> And every warbler had his tune by heart."

Twickenham.

Since the year 1718 the poet had been living at Twickenham, a pleasant country town upon the Thames, not many miles from London. Here he occupied the villa made famous by his residence, diverted himself with his garden and his grotto, surrounded by that curious combination of nature and art so attractive to eighteenth century taste. Here Pope entertained many distinguished guests; for he was now recognized as the first of living poets, and honored by persons of distinction in all fields. Alone among his contemporaries, he gave himself wholly to the vocation of letters. The French philosopher Voltaire paid him a visit. Henry St. John, Lord Bolingbroke, whom Pope addressed affectionately as "guide, philosopher, and friend," was for a time his neighbor, and a frequent guest. So too were Thomson, the poet of *The Seasons*, and Lady Mary Wortley Montague, the most brilliant woman of that day. But Pope quarreled outrageously with Lady Mary, after having addressed her in most ridiculous strains of gallantry, and in reply to some coarse and insulting epigrams was described as the "wicked little wasp of Twickenham," — an epithet which was upon occasion well deserved.

There were many littlenesses in the personality of Pope: his frail body was full of fret; he was suspicious, jealous, and irritable. So full of tricks and falsehoods was he that one of his friends affirmed that he never took tea without a stratagem. The littleness and greatness of Pope appear equally in his next important work, *The Dunciad*.

The Dunciad.

This famous satire had its genesis in that association of clever writers who composed the Scribblerus Club, the inspiration likewise of Swift's *Gulliver*, as well as of the less known satires of Arbuthnot, Atterbury, Gay, and Parnell. Swift and Pope, it is needless to say, were the dominant spirits of the coterie. *Gulliver's Travels* appeared in 1726, and in 1728 Pope published *The Dunciad*. Originally in three books, it was afterward revised and republished with an additional book in 1742.

The immediate plan of the satire follows that of Dryden's *MacFlecknoe*. Its serious purpose is to make war upon the dunces; and with all the flash and polish of his most brilliant style, Pope here pillories the mob of minor poets, critics, and romancers of his day. He has given immortality to some names that had better been ignored, and incidentally has stooped to the abuse of writers whose only fault was to have offended Pope. With Addison, Pope had quarreled, over some imagined injury, years before; the essayist had been dead ten years when *The Dunciad* was published; yet the old resentment finds expression in lines cruelly unjust to the memory of one who had befriended the poet in his youth, and whose character was happily beyond the reach of such attacks. There is something ludicrous in this spectacle of genius employing its greatest powers to square off some petty quarrel. The second publication of *The Dunciad* af-

forded an opportunity to settle more accounts. The original hero of the epic had been Lewis Theobald, who had incurred the enmity of the poet by his rigorous criticism of Pope's attempt to edit Shakespeare in 1725; but another character was enthroned as hero in the edition of 1742, Colley Cibber, the most popular actor and dramatist of the age, whose principal offense was that in 1730 he had received the honors of poet-laureate, an office for which he had no qualifications, and which brought only injury to his fame. Every writer with whom Pope had ever had a tilt was mercilessly lampooned in this epic of Duncedom. At first only the initials of the luckless authors were inserted, but afterward the names appeared in full, and footnotes were added which were often libelous in their assertions. No better essay in the gentle art of making enemies was ever devised than *The Dunciad;* and it was characteristic of its author that he took pains by flattery and craft to forestall retaliation by resort to law. Three prominent peers were prevailed upon to act as nominal publishers of the work; the king and queen were publicly presented with copies, and the report was circulated that the satire was issued under the patronage of these distinguished personages.

The Dunciad is a stronger work than Dryden's *MacFlecknoe*, but it does not approach in dignity or force the great political satire of *Absalom and Achitophel.* It is pungent and polished; it is also abusive and malicious. Although it is common to refer the spirit and tone of this satire to the influence of Jonathan Swift, it is impossible thus to excuse the virulence and coarseness, the petty personalities and rank injustice that inevitably mar this work. Its merit as literature depends upon passages which are remarkable for their skill in characterization, and upon that terse and

finished style which gives distinction to all of Pope's composition.

The best work of Pope's third period, the work of his later years, is in the *Moral Essays*, of which the *Essay on Man* is most conspicuous. The poet was now strongly influenced by his friend Bolingbroke, the brilliant politician and former Secretary of State, who posed also as a moralist and philosopher, although insincere in his professions of morality and superficial in thought. Of Bolingbroke's philosophy, however, Pope was a professed admirer, and it was this philosophy which the poet strove to embody in his *Essay on Man*. The plan of the work as a whole was ambitious and worthy of even greater genius than that of Pope. It was no less than to develop a system of morals dealing with man in various relations, social, political, and religious. Unhappily, the defects of his own uncertain logic betrayed Pope into inconsistencies and falsities. Even Bolingbroke remarked that the author of the *Essay* was "a very great wit and a very indifferent philosopher." The result of the poet's reasoning brought him to the statement of blank pantheism: —

The Moral Essays.

> "All are but parts of one stupendous whole,
> Whose body Nature is, and God the Soul."

The central thesis of the poem, "Whatever is, is right," admits of altogether too general application for any but the most radical philosophy; and Pope was far from occupying the position into which his real ignorance of any system had betrayed him. When accused of heterodoxy, he was amazed; and he was inexpressibly shocked to find his poem eulogized by Voltaire and applauded by the atheistical leaders in France. The *Essay* had appeared complete in 1734, and in 1738 Pope published his *Universal Prayer* to modify

the impressions produced so generally by his unsuccessful effort to

> "vindicate the ways of God to man."

In spite of its errors, however, the *Essay on Man* is an impressive composition. Again the poet displays his consummate art in phrase and verse, the deft use of language that rivets the inevitable word in its place and turns a couplet or a single line into an epigram as enduring as literature itself.

> "Honor and shame from no condition rise;
> Act well your part: there all the honor lies."

> "For modes of faith let graceless zealots fight;
> His can't be wrong whose life is in the right."

> "Vice is a monster of so frightful mien
> As to be hated needs but to be seen:
> Yet seen too oft, familiar with her face,
> We first endure, then pity, then embrace."

> "Know then thyself, presume not God to scan,
> The proper study of mankind is man."

To be sure, Pope's treasury of wit includes little more than the commonplace truisms of the race; he acknowledged as much in a familiar couplet, and was content to give them a form which might impress their truthfulness on the minds of men.[1]

Minor Poems.

Pope's other works included satires, translations, and imitations, with occasional poems which do not call for special notice. Like Dryden, he modernized two or three of the *Canterbury Tales*, but was wise enough to refrain from the attempt, suggested by a friend in the Scriblerus Club, to "civilize" the *Samson Agonistes*.

[1] "True wit is nature to advantage dressed;
What oft was thought, but ne'er so well expressed."
Essay on Criticism.

In 1744 there came the end to that life which was "one long disease." Whatever may be the feelings excited by those perversities of disposition, the ill-temper, the falsehood, the treachery, of this peculiar character, Pope always commands admiration for his persevering industry and brave resistance to racking pain. Johnson tells us that the poet suffered cruelly from headache; that his frail, deformed body could hardly be kept erect without the aid of a stiff canvas bodice into which he was laced every morning; that he could not dress or undress without assistance. In condemning the unnaturalness and affectation of Pope's literary style, it must be remembered that this was the common fault of the artificial period in which he lived. His contemporaries acknowledged his supremacy. Addison and Swift placed him among the peers of song. In vivid portraiture, in grace and elegance of diction, in the "happiness" of phrase, which distinguishes the masters of wit, in the terse vigor of his couplets, the correctness of his verse, in all those qualities which give distinction to poetry of the second rank, Pope is preëminent; upon this level of his art he leads. In the progress of English poetry it was no misfortune that it should receive the impress that came from the work of Alexander Pope.

His Death.

Suggestions for Study.

The Globe Edition of Pope's *Poetical Works* (Macmillan) is the best for students' use. The *Introductory Memoir* by the editor, Mr. A. W. Ward, should be carefully read. A good volume of *Selections* from the poet's works is edited with notes by E. B. Reed (Holt). Leslie Stephen's *Pope*, in the *English Men of Letters Series*, and W. J. Courthope's *Biography* of the poet are authoritative. Dr. Johnson included Pope in his *Lives of the Poets*, and there are notable essays upon Pope by Thackeray, in his *English Humourists*, Lowell, in *My Study Windows*,

and De Quincey, in the *Biographical Essays*. All the prominent writers on eighteenth century literature have discoursed upon Pope.

For special study the student may best select the poem *Windsor Forest*, the vivacious *Rape of the Lock*, the *Essay on Criticism*, and the *Essay on Man*. The peculiarities of Pope's personality, the theories and conception of his art, held by him and by the writers generally of that age, his own methods of versification, the dash and polish of his style, together with its limitations and its defects, will hardly escape the observant reader. The reiteration of Pope's only metrical form, the heroic couplet, will impress that structure upon the memory as the characteristic verse form of the Augustan age.

I. Windsor Forest. As this is largely a "nature" poem, study its descriptive parts. How does Pope see nature, and what points does he emphasize in description? Recall the studies of Chaucer and Spenser, and compare the *naturalness* and realism of their pictures with those of Pope. Consider the "pastoral" element in this poem; read Pope's *Discourse on Pastoral Poetry*, prefixed to his earlier poems. As you note the incongruities of this composition, note also passages which contain poetic beauty. What is the plan of the poem as a whole?

II. The Rape of the Lock. This poem is to be read, of course, in the spirit of the *burlesque* which it is, — a form of composition then in great favor. Recall the success of Butler's *Hudibras* (1663) and Swift's *Battle of the Books* (1704). Many interesting hints of contemporary manners and social usage may be gathered from the poem; the description of the belle's toilette and the account of the game at cards are especially vivacious, as well as humorous pictures of the time. Are there not also passages of real satire in the work? What is the tone of the poet's comments upon woman? Miss Fermor, the heroine of the piece, was heartily out of temper with the poet because of his portraiture: was she justified? In its earlier form the poem did not contain the parts which introduce the sylphs and gnomes; this

was an afterthought of the poet. Consider how much of the wit and elegance of this humorous masterpiece is due to their airy presence. Whence did Pope get this idea?

III. Essay on Criticism. It would be well to outline the parts of this essay. What is the general topic considered in the first fifty lines? Note the important place assigned to nature in establishing the standards of criticism; then note how her principles and laws are to be interpreted (lines 88–89). Consider the influence of the classic on Pope's thought. What ancient poets does he propose as models? Where is the error in Pope's theory (lines 139–140)? What force is there in his next suggestion (lines 152–153)? He is still speaking of the ancients: see how he tempers his statement (lines 163–166). In part II. the poet warns the critics against particular faults: what are the errors thus enumerated? In what sense does he use the term *conceit* (line 289), the word *numbers* (line 337), and why? Throughout the poem the word *wit* is frequently used in varying senses (as in lines 17, 28, 36, 53, 61, 80, 297); compare these lines and indicate the meaning which the poet intends the word to have in these places: what is the etymology and original meaning of *wit?* Point out such marked illustrations of Pope's happiness in epigram as are found in this poem. Study the passage (lines 337–383) in which the poet has tried to express something of the sense of his verse through its effect upon the ear; see especially lines 357, 369–373. Occasionally Pope breaks the monotony of the couplet by adding a third rhyme, as in lines 23–25; where else do you discover this? The pronunciation of that period will account for some of Pope's peculiar rhymes, as *none: own* (lines 9, 10); *joined: mankind* (lines 186, 187); but defective lines may be found, and also constructions which are grammatically defective, as in the couplet (lines 9–10)

> "'T is with our judgments as our watches, none
> Go just alike, yet each believes his own."

IV. Essay on Man. Follow a course similar to that suggested in the study of the last poem. The *Arguments*

prefixed to the *Epistles* will help in the analysis. Why did Pope address this work to Lord Bolingbroke? Look up the record of Bolingbroke's career and find out the facts of his political and literary achievements.

The "School" of Pope.

Of the numerous minor poets who followed Pope in his use of the couplet, and who exhibited the characteristics of the artificial school, the following are the most prominent. MATTHEW PRIOR (1664–1721) was a poor boy in Dorsetshire when discovered by the Earl of Dorset reading *Horace* behind a tavern bar. By the generosity of that nobleman he was sent to Cambridge. Later he entered politics, became Secretary of State for Ireland, and finally Ambassador to France. With Pope and Swift he joined in the project of the Scriblerus Club and wrote satirical poems and tales. JOHN GAY (1685–1732), a member of the same distinguished group, was especially noted for his *Beggar's Opera* (1728), conceived also with satire as its intent. His *Shepherd's Week* (1714) consists of six burlesque pastorals. *Trivia* (1715) is a satire upon city life. The characteristics of this school are found in the work of EDWARD YOUNG (1684–1765). *The Last Day*, a part of which appeared in *The Guardian* (1713), and *The Universal Passion*, a series of satires (1725–1728), are in the rhymed couplet. *Night Thoughts* (1742–1744), a lengthy moral essay in nine books, is written in blank verse. It contains passages of beauty and strength, but its impressiveness is due to its rhetorical quality rather than to spontaneity or passion. In the poetry of James Thomson, however, another key is struck. A real appreciation of nature gives distinction to his *Seasons*, — four long poems in blank verse. It is refreshing to find even within

James Thomson, 1700-48.

the lifetime of Pope a spirit of simple pleasure in the naturalness of nature, such as is conveyed in these lines from Thomson's *Summer*: —

> "Hence, let me haste into the mid-wood shade,
> Where scarce a sunbeam wanders through the gloom;
> And on the dark-green grass, beside the brink
> Of haunted stream, that by the roots of oak
> Rolls o'er the rocky channel, lie at large,
> And sing the glories of the circling year."

Thomson was a Scotchman; a graduate of Edinburgh, he had come to London and was making his living as a tutor when he found a publisher for his poem on *Winter*, in 1726. That on *Summer* followed in the next year, and *Spring* was published the year after. The poem on *Autumn* did not appear until 1730. Thomson wrote several plays and many vigorous songs, of which *Rule Britannia* is best known. *The Castle of Indolence* (1748), his last important work, is in the old Spenserian stanza, and suggests the indolent languor of its theme with consummate effect. The charm of nature is always present in the poetry of Thomson. Undisturbed by the tastes and influences of the artificial school, he pursues his independent course, and sounds the note which grows clearer and stronger in the latter half of the century, until it reaches its fullness of tone in the songs of Robert Burns.

III. THE RISE OF THE ENGLISH NOVEL.

It is customary to date the beginning of the English novel at about the middle of the eighteenth century, when Samuel Richardson and Henry Fielding introduced, to a large and delighted circle of English readers, what appeared to be a distinctly new form of literary creation. But the essential quality in all works of fiction is the story, and it is to a far earlier period

than this that we must look for origins in this department of literature.

The Real Beginnings. The love of the story is as ancient as the race, and the art of story-telling is as old as literature. As we have seen, the spirit of the story-teller held undisputed sway in Saxon hall and Norman castle, where gleeman and minstrel moved their rough audiences at will. The genius of the true story-teller lived in Chaucer; indeed his sketches of the Canterbury pilgrims, and particularly his portraitures of character in the metrical romance of *Troilus and Criseyde*, bring his work in very close relation with the productions of the novelists themselves. The prose romances of the Elizabethan age, the artificial compositions of John Lyly, of Sidney, of Lodge, and of Nash, together with the scores of imitations and translations which were in vogue at the close of the sixteenth century, exhibit comparatively little of that realistic quality essential to the novel. The spirit of these narratives was frankly unreal, and the art of the Elizabethan romancer was directed as far as possible away from the realities of common experience. The creations of the great dramatists were infinitely nearer the life of humanity. Nature, if she found any interpreter at all, spoke not in the romance but in the play. There was, however, one development of the fictitious narrative in that age which was significant of a new interest in the details of real life. This we find in the *rogue romance*, a natural outgrowth of the older romance of chivalry, which had supplied the Spanish and Italian models for Sidney's *Arcadia* and the works of that class. In both Spain and Italy these rogue stories were extremely popular. The hero of the adventures recounted was always a rascal, clever, impudent, immoral; his career was one of intrigue and scandal. The Spanish word

pícaro (rogue) gave to this group of stories the name *picaresque;* and by this name they are usually described. Numerous translations of Italian *novelle* had made the material familiar to English readers, and the romance of roguery became popular in England.

The *Pilgrim's Progress* may, in a way, be identified by its method with this class of works, however widely divergent in spirit and tone. At all events, Bunyan's hero, struggling amid the perils of the world, was a very real character to the devout Puritan who eagerly turned its pages. Many a pious reader of that day, with head bent over the record of Christian's falls and Christian's triumphs, must have whispered softly to himself, while tears rolled down his cheeks, "It is I; it is I!" Hardly more than a step was needed to usher in the novel: that was to drop the allegory and to describe men and women in the relations familiar to us and amid the surroundings of the world in which we live. Still more significant of the coming narrative than even the story of Bunyan's pilgrim was the appearance of that genuine *character* from English country life discovered by Steele and Addison. Sir Roger de Coverley is one of the personalities of English fiction, although the portraiture is presented only in a series of sketches, and belongs neither to the novel nor the stage. But a real beginning in the art of novel writing was made when, in 1719, Daniel Defoe published his inimitable narrative, *Robinson Crusoe.* Forerunners.

Defoe was a prominent figure among the busy men of letters who, by their intellectual strength and the elaborate elegance of their literary form, gave character to English literature in the age of Anne. He was not only contemporary with Addison, Steele, and Swift, but was engaged in the Daniel Defoe, 1659-1731.

same political battles; his interests were as keen, his services perhaps as notable as theirs. Like the rest he was a moralist, and although less skillful than they, used satire as his weapon. Yet while thus employed, sometimes opposing them, sometimes coöperating with them, he was never personally of them. By birth and inclination Defoe was democratic. His father was a butcher, plain James Foe, who knew nothing of the prefix to the family name, which for some shrewd reason his son assumed when about forty years of age. Self-reliant, courageous, enterprising, inventive, Daniel Defoe made the interests of the people his study. Indeed he did this often to his own disadvantage, for his personal interests were sometimes sacrificed or forgotten, and business failures were frequent incidents in his peculiar career.

Personal Career.

Defoe's parents were well-to-do people of the trading class, living in London, where he was born in 1659 or 1660. Although never in attendance at either of the universities, Daniel Defoe received a good education at an academy in Newington, then under the direction of Charles Morton, "a rank Independent," as his enemies called him, who in 1685 emigrated to America, and eventually became vice-president of Harvard College. Defoe seems to have been blessed with an inquisitive mind, and to have been curiously concerned to elucidate his own theories and correct the opinions of others. With astonishing energy he threw himself into the active life of his age, won fame as a political writer, both in pamphlets and periodicals, established one of the first newspapers, the little *Review*, which he conducted for some eight or nine years, moralized in print upon almost every conceivable theme, composed ballads and satires, which won the hearts of the people, and at sixty years of age made

REPRODUCTION OF ORIGINAL FRONTISPIECE IN FIRST EDITION OF ROBINSON CRUSOE (1719)

his name immortal by writing a story which, if not actually the first English novel, still holds its place among the finest achievements in English fiction.

Robinson Crusoe.

The narrative of *Robinson Crusoe* is based upon the story of Alexander Selkirk, a Scotch sailor, who had been abandoned by his comrades on the island of Juan Fernandez, off the coast of Chili. There he had remained solitary for five weary years, although he had succeeded by his skill, and with the coöperation of nature, in providing not a few comforts in the midst of his solitude. In 1711 he was discovered and brought back to England, where his story soon became known and attracted much curious attention. He remained for a time in Bristol, and thither went Daniel Defoe to see him, probably soon after his return; at this meeting he secured all of Selkirk's papers. At about the same period Richard Steele interviewed Selkirk, and printed an account of the latter's adventures in his paper *The Englishman*. Defoe made no use of his material for several years, but, in 1719, published his great story. This volume at once took its place by the side of Bunyan's book as one of the people's classics. The publisher cleared £1000. Edition followed edition. Several spurious abridgments were published. A whole literature of adventure followed, and, even in Europe, numerous fictitious accounts suggested by Defoe's narrative enjoyed a continuous success. All classes of readers were fascinated by this work. Within four months the book had reached its fourth edition, and since the day of its appearance its popularity has never waned. "Was there ever anything written by man," said Dr. Johnson in the next generation, "that was wished longer by its readers except *Don Quixote*, *Robinson Crusoe*, and *The Pilgrim's Progress?*"

It is important to know the secret of Defoe's power as a writer of fiction. Wherein lay the mastery that could create such absorbing interest? The key to Defoe's success is found in his minute attention to detail. He had the ability, as few writers have possessed it, to place himself in the situation of his characters, to see and think and feel with them. Placed thus and thus, he would reason, what should I desire and how should I provide? And so he became fertile in expedients. No one can forget the feeling of isolation experienced in common with his shipwrecked sailor, nor the self-congratulation that follows the safe arrival of each necessary article brought from the wreck to increase the little store in Crusoe's cabin. The critic Minto points out Defoe's discovery that narrative should be plain rather than adorned. He chose the simplest language at command and thus attained "the dullness of truth." **The Realism of Defoe.**

In 1722 Defoe published his *Journal of the Plague Year*. He had been but a boy of five when this dreadful visitation ravaged the city of London, and could have recalled little or nothing of that event; but his account is so minutely circumstantial and so vivid in its simple, commonplace details, that it has been accepted, often, as a genuine diary of the time. *The Memoirs of a Cavalier* (1720) is possibly an historical work; it was quoted as history by Lord Chatham in Parliament: but it is written in the same form of personal biography which we find in Defoe's fictions, and, even if based on fact, owes its effect to the extraordinary realistic power of its author. During the five years following the appearance of *Crusoe*, in addition to the two works just named, Defoe published four lengthy narratives remarkable for their realistic power. These were: *The Life, Adventures and* **Other Narratives.**

Piracies of the Famous Captain Singleton (1720), *Moll Flanders* (1722), *The History of Colonel Jacque* (1722), and *Roxana* (*The Fortunate Mistress*) (1724). A half dozen minor narratives, including accounts of the highwayman Jack Sheppard, the French criminal Cartouche, and "the Highland Rogue," Rob Roy, belong to the same period. As will be readily seen, these works represent the picaresque type of literature. *Moll Flanders* is the portraiture of a common thief, who escapes from Newgate, is transported to America, there reforms, and writes the record of her career. *Roxana* depicts the character of a notorious courtesan and is a study of crime in aristocratic circles. The hero of *Colonel Jacque* was born a gentleman, put apprentice to a pickpocket, was six and twenty years a thief. In people of the criminal class Defoe took a curious interest: his acquaintance with their experiences, both as rogues and as penitents, probably began during his confinement in Newgate as a political offender in 1703–4. In all these tales the author appears as a rigid moralist, inculcating lessons of warning skimmed from the experience of vice.

"Every wicked reader," runs the preface to *Colonel Jacque*, "will here be encouraged to a change; and it will appear that the best and only good end of a wicked and misspent life is repentance."

This is the burden of Moll Flanders' message: and thus these characters preach to the end. Of all these works *Moll Flanders* is the most realistic: by some critics it is given the highest place in the fiction of realism, although in popular interest it cannot compare with Defoe's real masterpiece, *Robinson Crusoe*.

Defoe continued active in politics to the last. In spite of his literary success his business affairs were

generally in confusion, and he was often in sore straits because of his creditors. The close of his life is obscure, but he was in hiding, even from the members of his own family, when his death occurred in London, in 1731. His wonderful activity as a writer is proved by the fact that his publications numbered no less than 250 distinct works.

The Novel.

Strictly speaking, Defoe's imaginative compositions are not *novels*, although their material is drawn from real life. They are rather *narratives* of adventure, in which the interest is aroused by the succession of incidents rather than by any substantial study of manners or character. Now the novel as a specific art form is distinctively a picture of life in its actual experiences, grave or gay, familiar or extraordinary. It always includes the presentation of character that is, or has been, or might be real. In its highest development the novel proposes a more or less accurate study of how cause and effect apply in the moulding of character. The novel may exhibit extreme ingenuity and dramatic intensity of situation and plot, but it must not depend upon these alone for its interest: and there are obvious bounds of probability and taste which must not be transgressed. Moreover, it must possess artistic form. Starting with a given situation it should proceed logically and naturally to its inevitable conclusion, which is developed through the influence of character upon character, plus the dominating power of incident and fate. The narrative throughout must be a unit: the motive forces should not be so numerous as to distract attention from the one central idea which controls our interest. Unity is for the most part secured by deftly weaving the threads of individual fortune into a compact strand; and this is commonly achieved by developing a close interrelation

between the subordinate personages and the principal personage, the hero or heroine, of the story. There should be no episodes or side-trackings in the progress of the plot. Incidents should be introduced because necessary to the narrative, and so arranged as to stimulate interest as the tale proceeds. The novelist must appreciate the laws of climax and dramatic effect. In the largest sense of the word, he must be an artist. One might go on to say that the novelist needs also to be a clear-sighted, clear-brained philosopher; for how otherwise may he assume to hold the mirror up to nature and say, Behold things as they are!

Samuel Richardson, 1689-1761.

Not all of these requirements, it is true, are met in the works of Samuel Richardson; nevertheless, the quality of his work is such that he is usually named the first English novelist; and his narrative *Pamela*, published in 1740, is accepted as the first real English novel. Like Defoe, Richardson belonged to the trading class. He was a printer and publisher. He early developed a genius for correspondence, and there is a familiar story which states that he wrote the love letters of two or three young women with whom he was intimately acquainted. His life is devoid of any public interest until the advent of his fiftieth year, when two booksellers proposed to Richardson that he should write a little book in the form of a series of letters dealing with the affairs of daily life. These letters were to serve as models in letter writing for those who had not acquired the art. Then it was that this sedate printer caught the idea of embodying vital interest and practical admonition in the execution of the plan. Basing his plot upon the adventure of a young woman whose experience had come to him through the anecdote of a friend, he wrote the story of *Pamela, or Virtue Rewarded.*

Defoe had employed in his stories the machinery of a fictitious autobiography. Richardson followed the same method, but threw his material into the form of correspondence. Pamela Andrews, the heroine of the novel, is left, through the death of a good woman who has befriended her, somewhat in the power of her benefactress's son. This gentleman, a type of the fashionable man of the world in that day, makes various assaults upon the honor of the young woman, whose character is exemplary, and who successfully repulses his advances, while compelled by circumstances to submit to endless persecution. Finally, however, Pamela's virtue is "rewarded" by the complete conversion of the reprobate, "Mr. B.," and the offer of an honorable marriage, which the heroine modestly and gratefully accepts. The novel is prolix to tediousness; yet it is marked by some obvious excellencies. It shows ingenuity of invention, its action is consistent, and there is a close and realistic study of details. The story of *Pamela* aroused an intense interest, and the novel received enthusiastic welcome.

Pamela.

Clarissa Harlowe was published in 1748. In this novel Richardson describes another contest between vice and virtue. This heroine has to contend against the brutality of her own heartless relatives, who insist upon her marriage with a man whom she detests; her trials are intensified by the persistent persecution of the profligate Lovelace, who represents the type of the cruelly selfish and licentious man of fashion in that era. Richardson's sympathy with womanhood was genuine and intelligent; his constant recognition of woman's dignity and rights is a conspicuous quality in his works. The novelist attempted finally to give to the world his conception of the "gentleman;" and in the novel *Sir Charles*

Richardson's Later Novels.

Grandison (1753), he paints "a man of true honor" as he understands him.

"Could he be otherwise than the best of husbands, who was the most dutiful of sons; who is the most affectionate of brothers; the most faithful of friends; who is good upon principle in every relation of life?"

Thus exclaims the hero's wife, when, at the completion of the story, she too is rewarded for her virtues by the bestowal of this paragon upon herself.

Henry Fielding, 1707-54.

Henry Fielding, contemporary and literary rival of Richardson, was a man of very different type. He was of an aristocratic family, had been educated at Eton, and had studied law at Leyden. He was a writer of comic plays, lived a gay, reckless life, and in three years had squandered his own and his wife's property. Although admitted to the bar in 1740, he was never successful as a lawyer. Fielding became a writer to support his family; he became a novelist to ridicule the author of *Pamela*. It was natural that Fielding should laugh at Richardson. The latter writer, while an apt moralist, was not a skillful artist; in Fielding the artistic sense was very strong. He perceived that Richardson's characters were not *natural*, and seized his opportunity. *Joseph Andrews* (1742) was begun as a parody on *Pamela*. In Fielding's story Joseph is presented as the brother of Richardson's heroine, and is discovered under circumstances similar to those in which the girl was placed, with a complete reversal of conditions. Joseph's master has died, and it is the widow who persecutes the young man with her attentions. The story turns upon Joseph's rejection of her overtures, and the various fortunes and misfortunes of the hero until happily married to the girl of his own choice. Fortunately

for Fielding's fame as a novelist, he seems quickly to have forgotten his first object, that of ridicule, and to have become honestly interested in the fortunes of his characters. He depicted them with the untrammeled freedom and boisterous vigor of his day. The novel is coarse if judged by the standards of the present; but it is brimful of nature, and faithfully reflects the spirit of English life in the eighteenth century. Fielding had discovered his power, and his next novel, *Tom Jones* (1749), surpassed in every point the novel already described. *Tom Jones* is always placed among the best novels ever written; but it must be judged, morally, by the standard of its age. It is marked by the same blunt realism which colors *Joseph Andrews*. The humor is coarse, though genuine. The manners depicted are usually the *bad* manners of that generation, and the "virtues" of the hero are by no means those of Sir Charles Grandison. But again Fielding was faithful to nature in his portraiture. He produced real characters. The personality of Squire Western, and that of Tom Jones himself, are irresistible, and will always remain distinct figures among the great creations of English novelists. In *Amelia* (1751), Fielding's last novel, he presents a portrait of his wife, who had died several years before; some qualities of her personality had previously been portrayed in the character of Sophia, the heroine of *Tom Jones*.

Fielding's part in the development of the realistic novel is most important. He started it upon its great career. Thoroughly in love with life himself, blessed with a keen sense of humor, filled with an excess of physical vigor and healthy animal spirit, he had no patience with the sentimentalist or the professional moralist, although he always claimed that his novels, as well as his plays, were intended to produce a distinctly moral

effect. Theoretically, he denied that the "hero" exists, and made no effort to gloss the defects and vices of his characters.

Tobias Smollett, 1721-71.

In the works of Smollett the picaresque quality is again dominant. This writer was a Scotch surgeon, with a taste for adventure, who had served for four years on one of the king's ships. His knowledge of the sea and of the sailor's life supplied him material for his most important characters, all of which belong to the eccentric type. His first novel, *Roderick Random*, was published in 1748; *Peregrine Pickle* (1751), a more vigorous work, is disfigured by the immoral character of its hero, but presents one of Smollett's most successful portraitures, the eccentric character of Commodore Trunnion. Other novels followed, including, as the most important, *Ferdinand, Count Fathom* (1754), *Sir Launcelot Graves* (1762), and *Humphrey Clinker* (1771). These all illustrate the literature of roguery, and owe more to the influence of the French story-teller Le Sage than to Fielding.

Laurence Sterne, 1713-68.

Sterne was an Irishman and an officer in the army; later he entered the Church and became Prebend of York. The six volumes of his published sermons, however, are less known than his humorous fiction *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, Gentleman*. It is impossible to describe this whimsical work as a novel, for it is a cleverly constructed series of sketches (originally in nine volumes) which detail with great accuracy and minute circumstance the incidents attending the nativity of Tristram Shandy: the hero of the story does not appear in his own proper person, except as narrator of this unique autobiography. The character painting is excellent, the personality of Uncle Toby standing

out above and beyond the rest. Uncle Toby, who still suffers with the wound received in the French wars, yet so patient of injuries that he would not harm a fly, — Uncle Toby, the innocent victim of the wily Widow Wadman, — Uncle Toby and his body servant Corporal Trim — as much a part of Uncle Toby as is the latter's wig or stick, — this amiable, honest, brave, sentimental Uncle Toby is one of the best-drawn characters in eighteenth century fiction. Sterne completed his story but a year before his death. One other work, *The Sentimental Journey*, is marked by the same peculiar qualities which distinguish *Tristram Shandy;* an artificial sentiment pervades them both.

The Vicar of Wakefield.

In 1766, when Laurence Sterne was just putting final touches upon *Tristram Shandy*, there stole quietly into the ranks of English fiction a genuine novel, a book more notable and more important, far, than that of Sterne in its influence upon modern fiction. This was Goldsmith's clever story *The Vicar of Wakefield* — our first real novel of domestic life. "There are an hundred faults in this thing," said Goldsmith, with naïve shrewdness, in his preface; "but," he added, "a book may be very amusing with numerous errors, or it may be very dull without a single absurdity." The novel proved his assertion. There is no lack of life interest in this panorama of an English home, with its little epic of struggle and triumph through the experiences of common life. The patient vicar, who endures his share of trouble with fortitude and faith, is an attractive figure to novel readers still. It is a family record, quietly humorous, in its simple routine; with its sensations and its crises also, but without brutality, without indecency, to mar the wholesome current of its course. In spite of technical faults in the construction of the plot, this book

had a strong influence on subsequent works. In Germany it produced a great impression upon Goethe and his contemporaries. Its appearance really marks an epoch in English fiction, for it opened an entirely new field to the novelist and supplied a model for what we now regard as the best expression of his art.

Bibliography.

For general reference in the historical study of the novel, Masson's *British Novelists and their Styles*, Tuckerman's *History of Prose Fiction*, and Dunlop's *History of Fiction* are standard works. *The English Novel*, by Walter Raleigh (Scribners), *A Study of Prose Fiction*, by Bliss Perry (Houghton, Mifflin & Co.), and *The Development of the English Novel*, by Wilbur L. Cross (Macmillan), are the most helpful of recent books upon this subject. *The English Novel in the Time of Shakespeare*, by J. J. Jusserand (Putnam), is a most interesting discussion of the period indicated. The later development is covered in William Forsythe's *Novels and Novelists of the Eighteenth Century*. Simonds' *Introduction to the Study of English Fiction* (Heath) contains a brief historical review, and also illustrative selections from the story-tellers from the time of the Anglo-Saxons down to that of Sterne. *The Art of Fiction*, by W. D. Howells, *The Novel: What It Is*, by F. Marion Crawford, and *The Experimental Novel*, by Emile Zola, are interesting essays by the novelists themselves.

In biography, the student will find lives of Defoe, Fielding, Sterne, and Goldsmith in the *English Men of Letters Series;* of Smollett and Goldsmith in the *Great Writers Series.* H. D. Traill's *The New Fiction, and Other Essays* contains an essay upon *Samuel Richardson*, and also one on *The Novel of Manners.* There is a critical study of Richardson in Leslie Stephen's *Hours in a Library.* In the September, 1893, number of the *Century Magazine* there is an article by Mrs. Oliphant upon *The Author of Robinson Crusoe;* and in *Scribner's Magazine* for the same date a paper by Austin Dobson on *Richardson at Home.* Sir Walter Scott's

Lives of the Novelists includes sketches of Richardson, Fielding, Smollett, and Sterne. Thackeray's *English Humourists* gives a vivacious picture of these men and of their age. Saintsbury's *Introduction to the Works of Henry Fielding* and the chapter on Fielding in G. B. Smith's *Poets and Novelists* should be read. There is a life of Smollett by David Hannay, and one of Sterne by H. D. Traill.

IV. ESSAYISTS OF THE SECOND HALF.

Among English men of letters in the second half of the eighteenth century, the dominant figure is that of Samuel Johnson, booksellers' hack, parliamentary reporter, writer of the *Rambler* and the *Idler* essays, compiler of the great English Dictionary, author of *Rasselas* and the *Lives of English Poets;* observer, moralist, and critic; ponderous, sententious, irascible, domineering, honest old Doctor Johnson, the dictator in literary art for his generation; less read, perhaps, than any other great writer of that century, and yet better known to posterity than any other eighteenth century essayist. "The memory of other authors," says Macaulay, "is kept alive by their works. But the memory of Johnson keeps many of his works alive."

Samuel Johnson, 1709-84.

Samuel Johnson was born at Lichfield, in Staffordshire, where his father, Michael Johnson, was a stationer and a dealer in books, well reputed for his learning, but eccentric and unlucky in trade. Like Pope, Johnson was a frail, sickly child, afflicted with St. Vitus's dance and tainted with scrofula. He never attained good health; his huge, overgrown frame rolled in his chair, he shuffled and stumbled in his gait, he was always troubled with nervous twitchings which distorted the muscles of his face, and was subject to fits of morbid melancholy which, as he declared, kept him mad half his life. The Lichfield bookseller was

Early Life.

hardly in a position to give his son a university career, but the boy learned Latin in the Lichfield school and browsed among his father's books. A chance discovery of a copy of *Plutarch's Lives* aroused a passion for classical learning; and, with some assistance, Johnson was sent to Oxford in 1729 and entered as a student in Pembroke College. At the time of his entrance he was distinguished for his familiarity with numerous Latin texts not commonly read; and he soon attracted attention by the excellence of his Latin translations. Aside from his success in this field his stay at the University made little impression. In spite of his ability he was naturally indolent and withal miserably poor. His father's death in 1731 compelled an immediate return to Lichfield, and at twenty-two, his education half completed, penniless, and diseased, he began the long and bitter struggle with circumstance, from which he emerged thirty years later the literary leader of his age.

At first Johnson attempted to teach in a private school in Leicestershire, but failed on account of his peculiarities and physical infirmities. He then tried to make a living by translating for the publishers, and began his contributions to the magazines. At twenty-five he married a Mrs. Porter, widow of a silk merchant; the lady was twenty years his senior, but this singular experiment appears to have been the result of genuine mutual attachment, and was productive only of happiness to both. Eight hundred pounds, which formed the marriage portion, was unwisely invested in starting a private school at their home near Lichfield, which was attended by only three or four pupils, and closed abruptly. In 1737 Johnson made a fresh start, and this time, fixing his hopes upon a literary career, he tramped the dusty road to London. Mrs. Johnson re-

mained behind, but her husband did not journey alone; for by his side there trudged young Davy Garrick, a pupil in the school just closed, a lad of parts, whose youthful brain was filled with dreams of fame and fortune to be won in the great city. A curious couple they must have made: the hulking, awkward frame of the master towering above the graceful, dapper youth at his side. The friendship of this strangely assorted pair is one of the pleasant features of that later period, when fame indeed had come to both, and each was master in his special field.

The miseries of the hack-writer at this period have been most vividly pictured by Macaulay. "Even the poorest pitied him; and they well might pity him. For if their condition was equally abject, their aspirings were not equally high, nor their sense of insult equally acute. To lodge in a garret up four pairs of stairs, to dine in a cellar among footmen out of place, to translate ten hours a day for the wages of a ditcher, to be hunted by bailiffs from one haunt of beggary and pestilence to another, from Grub Street to St. George's Fields, and from St. George's Fields to the alleys behind St. Martin's Church, to sleep on a bulk in June and amidst the ashes of a glass house in December, to die in an hospital and to be buried in a parish vault, was the fate of more than one writer, who, if he had lived thirty years earlier, would have been admitted to the sittings of the Kitcat or the Scriblerus Club, would have sat in Parliament, and would have been intrusted with embassies to the High Allies."[1]

The Life of the Poor Writer.

The cares and privations of this life, if not its extremes of wretchedness, Johnson knew by experience, through a period of perhaps twenty years. It is only

[1] *Essay on Samuel Johnson.*

just that we recall these painful circumstances as we smile over the grotesque figure, the savage temper, the voracious appetite, and the slovenly dress, which appear in the portrait of the Doctor Johnson whom Boswell knew and described.

Early Labors.

In 1738 appeared Johnson's poem *London*, a satire in imitation of Juvenal, which drew considerable attention to its author. It aroused the friendly interest of Pope, who endeavored, without success, to secure for the satirist some more substantial recognition than mere words of praise. Johnson now became a regular contributor to the *Gentleman's Magazine*, then published by Cave, furnishing articles on all sorts of topics, receiving but scanty pay. From November, 1740, to February, 1743, he wrote the parliamentary reports which were published regularly in that magazine under the heading *Doings of the Senate of Lilliput*. The manner and the character of the work were such as to make this a remarkable achievement. No reporters were then permitted in the houses of Parliament, but persons employed by the publisher attended the sessions, noted the subjects under discussion, the names of the speakers, and points in the arguments advanced. These facts were then brought to Johnson, who, out of such scant material, composed the speeches that were supposed to have been actually delivered, and gave them the form which they assumed in the published debates. When the fictitious eloquence of these reports led to their acceptance by the public as genuine, Johnson, who was sturdily honest in all his dealings, refused to prepare them longer; but the fact remains that he is the author, so far as the composition is concerned, of the entire series of important parliamentary efforts ascribed to distinguished statesmen during those two years. With humorous

frankness he declared, when complimented for the impartiality with which he had contrived to deal out reason and eloquence to both parties, that while he had saved appearances tolerably well, he had taken good care that the Whig dogs should not have the best of it.[1]

The Rambler and the Idler.

In spite of the hardness of the road, the privations and wretchedness of his life, in spite of disappointment and depression, Johnson was advancing slowly, but steadily, in his career. His prolific pen was kept busily employed on commonplace shop work by the publishers; he was not without a few influential and sympathetic friends; but his tasks were drudgery, and he lacked altogether the assistance that had helped Addison and Swift to a speedy success. In 1747 he published proposals for a dictionary of the English language, and his name was sufficiently well known to warrant the venture in which he next engaged. In March, 1750, he published the first number of the *Rambler*, a little serial modeled somewhat on the style of the *Tatler* and the *Spectator;* but Johnson's manner was too heavy; the agreeable humor and lightness of touch which had made the earlier periodicals so attractive were wholly lacking, and although didactic essays, such as Johnson produced, were looked upon with greater favor then than now, the *Rambler* enjoyed no great vogue. For two years, however, the little paper continued to appear twice a week, and all but two or three numbers came from Johnson's own hand. Six years later he again started a periodical of somewhat lighter character; this was the *Idler*, which was published weekly, and ran for one hundred and three numbers. Its circulation was not large, and with the appearance of the final sheet, the long list of essay

[1] See Croker's *Boswell* for the entire account.

serials, begun by Richard Steele fifty years before, came to an end.

The Dictionary.

The great *Dictionary* was completed and published in 1755. It represented an enormous amount of labor; a grammar and a history of the language were included in the plan, and for seven years Johnson had been employed upon the task, directing the work of assistants and copyists, who were paid out of the proceeds from the work. In spite of its errors and the queer conceits of its author's personality, this *Dictionary* was a great achievement. No such comprehensive work had ever before been attempted. Johnson's fame was now secured, and he is said to have derived great satisfaction when subsequently introduced as "the great lexicographer," a term especially pleasing to his classical ear. Some of Johnson's odd definitions have long served to amuse the world. *Network* he defined as "anything reticulated or decussated at equal distances, with interstices between the intersections." *Pension* is "an allowance made to any one without an equivalent. In England it is generally understood to mean pay given to a state hireling for treason to his country." *Oats* he described as "a grain which in England is generally given to horses, but in Scotland supports the people." These eccentric lapses of his genius were due in some degree to the embarrassments of his struggle with poverty, as well as to the capricious indulgence of prejudice. It is significant of the frankness of his mind that, when asked by a lady why he had defined *pastern* as "the knee of a horse," he instantly replied, "Ignorance, madam, pure ignorance." Just before the publication of the completed work, its editor addressed to Lord Chesterfield the celebrated *Letter*, a masterpiece of strong invective, rejecting with ironical politeness

that nobleman's tardy proffer of assistance. It contains his famous characterization of the literary patron, a type familiar enough to the struggling authors of the eighteenth century.

"Is not a patron, my lord, one who looks with unconcern on a man struggling for life in the water, and when he has reached ground, encumbers him with help? . . . I hope it is no very cynical asperity not to confess obligations where no benefit has been received; or to be unwilling that the public should consider me as owing that to a patron which Providence has enabled me to do for myself."

Johnson's resources were still meagre; and upon the death of his mother in 1759,[1] he was compelled to rely upon his pen to provide money for the funeral expenses. In the evenings of a single week he composed the didactic romance of *Rasselas, an Abyssinian Prince.* The tone of this work reflects the general melancholy of his mind and suggests the futility of the search for happiness in the world. In 1762, through the persuasion of friends, the essayist accepted a pension, granted by the ministry of George III. This assured an annual income of £300, and thereafter he was free from want.

Rasselas.

Upon a memorable May afternoon in 1763, in the back parlor of a bookseller's shop in Covent Garden, began the singular acquaintance of Samuel Johnson and James Boswell. Vain, shallow, and garrulous, this young Scotchman, who pretended to be studying law, but who happened for the hour to be bent upon making the acquaintance of distinguished men, recounts the circumstances of his introduction.

James Boswell.

"I was much agitated," says Boswell; "and recollecting his prejudice against the Scotch, of which I had heard much,

[1] Johnson's wife had died in 1752, a loss from which he was long in recovering.

I said to Davies, 'Don't tell him where I come from.' 'From Scotland,' cried Davies roguishly. 'Mr. Johnson' (said I), 'I do indeed come from Scotland, but I cannot help it.' 'That, sir,' roared Johnson, 'I find is what a very great many of your countrymen cannot help.' This stroke stunned me a good deal; and when we had set down I felt not a little embarrassed, and apprehensive of what might come next."

Poor Boswell; his idolatry exposed him to many similar shocks, but the blindness of his devotion, or his unsensitive skin, rendered him invulnerable to all attacks. He has become famous through his consuming admiration for this great man. Samuel Johnson was his idol, and his worship was complete. He haunted his master's lodgings, trotted after him in his perambulations down Fleet Street, sat with him at the taverns, submitted to his irascible humor, and placidly endured the explosions of his thunderous wit. For twenty years he kept a journal in which he faithfully recorded the acts and sayings of his hero, setting down in minute detail all that fell under his observant eye or upon his inquisitive ear. The result was Boswell's *Life of Johnson*, a biography which surpasses every other; an accurate, complete portraiture of its original, presenting all the little weaknesses and trifling oddities, as well as the weighty wisdom, wholesome humor, and blunt common sense of his ponderous friend.

Macaulay has summarized the features of Boswell's portrait: —

"There is the gigantic body, the huge face seamed with the scars of disease, the brown coat, the black worsted stockings, the gray wig with the scorched foretop, the dirty hands, the nails bitten and pared to the quick. We see the eyes and mouth moving with convulsive twitches; we see the heavy form rolling; we hear it puffing; and then comes

the 'Why, sir!' and the 'What then, sir?' and the 'No, sir!' and the 'You don't see your way through the question, sir!'"

Was ever hero so frankly portrayed elsewhere?

The Club.

In 1764 was organized the famous Literary Club. Its membership included Sir Joshua Reynolds, the portrait painter; David Garrick, who, since his arrival in London as Samuel Johnson's comrade of the road, had made himself the foremost actor of his generation; Goldsmith, Johnson, Burke, and a score of others almost equally distinguished for literary attainment in that day. They met regularly at the Turk's Head Tavern, ate and drank together, and made many an evening mellow with their mirth. It was as brilliant a group of men as that which composed the Scriblerus Club in the time of Pope and Swift, or the coterie that loitered at Will's Coffee-House with Addison and Steele. In this congenial company the great lexicographer divested himself of his formal phrases, his sonorous sentences, and his ponderous words. Here he spoke naturally, and his spontaneity was flavored with the very essence of sound sense and lively wit. It was as the recognized leader of the Club, and chief critical authority among its members, that Johnson is best known to-day. Boswell, who, happily, by Dr. Johnson's autocratic influence, had gained admission to the group, is our chief source of information on all points connected with its history.

Later Life.

In 1765 Johnson edited Shakespeare; and ten years later set about preparing an important series of biographies designed to accompany a great edition of the English poets, of which the final volume appeared in 1781. In these biographies, afterward collected under the title *Lives of the Poets*, Johnson's most important criticisms appear, and some of his best

prose. Meanwhile he traveled to some extent, visiting, in company with Boswell, the highlands of Scotland and the islands off the northern coast — publishing an account of his observations in *A Journey to the Hebrides*. In 1774 he made a tour through Wales, and in the following year visited Paris, in company with his devoted friends, the Thrales.

Johnson suffered a stroke of paralysis in 1783, and on December 13, 1784, he died in his Fleet-street house, amid the scenes with which his life had been most closely associated. His body found a resting-place of honor in Westminster Abbey.

The personality of Samuel Johnson is wonderfully distinct; his very eccentricities have endeared his memory. It is the peculiarities that we first recall: how he kept stores of orange peel tucked away in table drawers; how he insisted on touching every post which he passed on the street; how he swallowed cup after cup of scalding tea in gulps, until his eyes protruded and the sweat stood on his forehead; how he tore at his meat like a famished animal; how he growled and snarled and puffed and grunted, contradicting, reviling, overwhelming with a storm of rhetoric all who differed from his judgments. But we must remember also the courage and the perseverance with which he struggled up the long, hard way to fame; the piety and purity of his life; the kind heart that led him to put pennies into the grimy fists of sleeping waifs at night, that they might have something to buy a morsel for breakfast; the benevolence that turned his lodgings into an asylum, where he harbored a blind old woman, a negro servant, and two or three other queer dependents whose claims upon his charity we do not understand. He was respected and beloved by the distinguished people who were his friends. Burke wept at his bedside, and

parted from him with the words, "My dear sir, you have always been too good for me." And Fanny Burney, author of *Evelina* and other fashionable novels, stood outside his door, sobbing, when he died.

Suggestions for Study.

As we have the term *Addisonian* to describe the easy, graceful vivacity of style characteristic of the *Spectator's* pleasant prose, so we use the terms *Johnsonian* and *Johnsonese* to indicate the sententious and weighty diction of the *Rambler* and the *Dictionary*. "If you were to write a fable about little fishes," said Goldsmith to Johnson on one occasion, "you would make the little fishes talk like whales!" When Johnson was making the tour of the Hebrides, he described the following incident in a well-known letter to Mrs. Thrale. "When we were taken upstairs, a dirty fellow bounced out of the bed on which one of us was to lie." But in the published account of the journey, it is recorded thus: "Out of one of the beds on which we were to repose, started up, at our entrance, a man black as a Cyclops from the forge." Once, speaking of a certain play, he remarked, "The *Rehearsal* has not wit enough to keep it sweet;" then, after a pause, "It has not vitality enough to preserve it from putrefaction."

This peculiarity of his diction, however, is characteristic of Johnson's earlier works. In *Rasselas*, and in the papers of the *Rambler*, we note the preponderance of long and sonorous Latin derivatives; while in the *Lives of the Poets*, Johnson's style is, if anything, more free from this fault than that of most writers of his day. The student will notice, nevertheless, that Johnson is always formal, and almost always in a philosophizing, moralizing mood, and that his tone is serious, his manner heavy, pompous. He should note the constant use of the balanced structure, and the frequent antithesis; these characteristics he will find later especially marked in Macaulay's composition — a composition modeled in large degree upon that of Johnson.

The student's reading should include some of the essays contained in the *Rambler* and the *Idler*, the romance

Rasselas, and at least one of the *Lives of the Poets*. The handiest volume of miscellaneous selections is the *Johnson* in the *Little Masterpieces*, edited by Bliss Perry (Doubleday, Page and Company). *Rasselas*, edited by O. F. Emerson, is found in the series of *English Readings* (Holt). There is no English author concerning whom more delightful books have been written, and none whose personality is more attractive to the reader who understands. Boswell's famous *Life* is the basis of our familiarity with its hero's character, and any of its pages will but stimulate the desire to read further. Croker's *Boswell* is the edition which inspired the essays on Johnson by Macaulay and Carlyle; while both these essays are of great interest, Macaulay's is by far the more vivid: Carlyle gives us a philosophy of Johnson; Macaulay paints a portrait. These two essays are published in a single volume with full notes, edited by W. Strunk (Holt). Mr. J. F. Waller, in *Boswell and Johnson* (*Cassell's Popular Library*), has written a delightfully picturesque account of Johnson's intercourse with his famous friend; and Thomas Seccomb's *Age of Johnson* (Bell) is successful in the same particular. Minto's *Manual of English Prose Literature* (Ginn) contains a technical analysis of Johnson's style, and J. Scott Clark's *Study of English Prose Writers* contains valuable criticism and bibliography. All historians of this period in our literature have something worthy of note on Johnson.

Oliver Goldsmith, 1728-74.

Among the struggling writers of Grub Street, familiar with the difficulties and the miseries through which Samuel Johnson pushed his sturdy way to the dictatorship of English letters in that generation, there is no more personally attractive figure than that of Oliver Goldsmith, essayist, dramatist, novelist, and poet. With light-hearted, irresponsible Dick Steele, he shares the ready affection of English readers, who are apt to look with kindly indulgence upon those victims of genius that

seem peculiarly incapable of directing their own affairs and wholly indifferent to the consequences of their own erratic behavior. A free-hearted, impulsive Irish boy, born in the insignificant village of Pallas, County Longford, Oliver Goldsmith grew up, the son of a poor Irish curate. Through the larger part of his boyhood the family home was in Lissoy, whither his parents had removed when the child was two years old; and here he became familiar with the characters and scenes which appear, idealized, in *The Deserted Village* and *The Vicar of Wakefield*. Like Pope and Johnson, Goldsmith was unfortunate in possessing noticeable physical defects. He was ugly and uncouth; his face was disfigured with the marks of smallpox, and his frame was short and chunky. He was derided at school for his awkwardness and his stupidity, yet his boundless good-nature, his cheery hopefulness, and his easy indifference to the blows of fate, always won him sympathy and friends.

School Days.

After a troublous term of desultory study in various schools and with indifferent tutors, Goldsmith entered Trinity College, Dublin, at seventeen years of age. He wore the coarse black gown and red cap of the "sizar," did janitor service, and waited on table in the commons. Even thus he was wretchedly poor, and when, two years after entrance, his father died, the young student nearly starved in his attic room. To earn a little money he began writing street ballads, and used to steal out at night to hear them sung and to see if they would sell. It was characteristic of his benevolent nature even then that the hard-earned shillings were as often shared with the first beggar he met as spent for the clothes and food that he sorely needed. Goldsmith's career at the University was as irregular as that of Swift, who had failed

in Trinity sixty years before. He took a conspicuous part in some college prank, quarreled with his tutor, and ran away, but was brought back by his brother, and, somehow, took the bachelor's degree in 1749.

Weary of tutoring, which he attempted once or twice with poor success, Goldsmith made a half-hearted effort to enter the Church, and failed. The idea of emigrating to America occurred to him; his relatives equipped him with a good horse and thirty pounds in money and started him for Cork; but he missed his ship, and with characteristic cheerfulness turned up at home without money and riding a horse greatly inferior to the one with which he set out. He then borrowed fifty pounds of his uncle, and set forth for London to study law; but at Dublin he lost his money in a gambling-house and again appeared before his astonished relatives as hopeful and irresponsible as ever. With fresh assistance from his uncle, the Dublin graduate finally reached Edinburgh in 1752 and began the study of medicine. Here Goldsmith became exceedingly popular with his student comrades as a good story-teller and singer of Irish songs, but seems to have made little progress in the study of medicine. Within two years' time a sudden impulse seized him; he announced that he would complete his medical studies abroad; and forthwith he set out on his famous pilgrimage through Europe.

Wanderings.

Ostensibly a student of medicine, Goldsmith journeyed to Holland and remained for a brief period in Leyden; but the spirit of roving soon took possession of him, and the next two years were passed in picturesque wanderings through France, Switzerland, Germany, and Italy. He may have studied for a few months at the University of Padua; but scarcely any details of his life during this period are known. More vagabond than student, he begged his way along

the pleasant roads of southern Europe, exulting in the freedom of this careless life, depending on his flute and his songs to find a welcome to the homes and tables of the peasantry. In February, 1756, Goldsmith arrived in London with a rather dubious degree and desperately poor. After failing again as a tutor in some country boarding school, he became a chemist's assistant, and finally obtained a meagre practice as a physician in the Southwark district of London.

The literary career of Oliver Goldsmith began early in 1757, when, after meeting Griffiths, editor of *The Monthly Review*, he was engaged at an "adequate" salary to supply copy for that magazine. The conditions of the hack-writer in that age have been described; struggling with the difficulties and discouragements of his position, handicapped by his own improvidence and reckless habits of life, Goldsmith never emerged wholly from the dangers and miseries of his class. Yet his literary abilities soon won recognition, and his works are more highly esteemed than those of the great Doctor Johnson himself. In 1759 he published *An Enquiry into the Present State of Polite Learning in Europe*, which attracted general attention by the beauty of its style. He met Bishop Percy, compiler of the *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry*, and Tobias Smollett the novelist, then editor of *The Critical Review;* to this periodical he became a contributor. He started a publication called *The Bee*, for which he furnished the essays which it contained, and wrote for *The Busy Body*, *The Lady's Magazine*, and other periodicals. In *The Public Ledger* appeared his *Chinese Letters*, afterward published under the title of *The Citizen of the World*, containing the observations and comment of a fictitious Oriental visiting England. This work greatly

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enlarged the reputation of its author, and in 1760 the essayist moved into better lodgings in Fleet Street, where he was honored with a call from Johnson, who soon became a valuable friend. He came to know Garrick, Burke, and the rest of that famous group, and was one of the nine original members who organized the "Club" in 1764. In Boswell's gossipy account of its sessions, Goldsmith's blunders and drolleries, conscious and unconscious, are given almost as great prominence as the more ponderous sallies of the dictator himself.

Goldsmith's Best Works.

In 1764 appeared the first of Goldsmith's long poems, *The Traveller*. It was dedicated to his brother, to whom the poet was tenderly attached, and whose lovable personality is sketched in the opening verses of the poem. Touched here and there by the friendly hand of Johnson, *The Traveller* proved an immediate success and gave its author a high position among the writers of the time. Two years later came the publication of Goldsmith's one novel, *The Vicar of Wakefield*, which had been discovered by Samuel Johnson, unfinished, in the poet's lodging, during one of Goldsmith's enforced retirements on account of debt, in 1762. His next production of note was a play, *The Good Natured Man*, in 1768; but this comedy did not prove a success upon the stage. In 1770 Goldsmith published his best-known poem, *The Deserted Village;* and three years later *She Stoops to Conquer* won an immediate fame upon the stage and a popularity which it has never lost.

But Goldsmith's literary success brought him no substantial relief from the embarrassments by which he was always surrounded. However well paid for his writings, he spent double the amount of his income on

whatever seized his fancy. Extravagant in his dress and in his pleasures, he was also extravagant in his benevolence, and recklessly responded to the appeals of the worthy and unworthy alike. Hopelessly involved in debt, he grew despondent, became ill with a fever, and died April 4, 1774, at the early age of forty-five. He was buried in the Temple Church, and a monument in his honor was erected by the Club, in Westminster Abbey.

Suggestions for Study.

The works of Oliver Goldsmith are full of a rich vivacity and charm that make them as readable to-day as they were when Doctor Johnson and the other learned gentlemen of the Club set the seal of their distinguished approval upon them. Goldsmith's great versatility is the most conspicuous quality of his genius. His prose style is admirable. "Where is now a man who can pen an essay with such ease and elegance as Goldsmith?" demanded Johnson. His ease, simplicity, and naturalness, his nice choice of words, his perfect command of epithet and phrase, give distinction to everything he wrote. "Goldsmith, both in verse and prose," says Hazlitt, "was one of the most delightful writers in the language." The general qualities of his style will be obvious to any student who thoughtfully reads his works.

An excellent selection from his essays is supplied by the volume on Goldsmith in the *Little Masterpieces*, edited by Bliss Perry (Doubleday, Page and Company). Number 68 of the *Riverside Literature Series* (Houghton, Mifflin and Company) contains *The Deserted Village*, *The Traveller*, and some minor poems, edited with notes for students' use. These two poems should be carefully read as forming a literary landmark midway between the compositions of the classic period of English poetry and the development of the new movement which came with Burns and Wordsworth. While the metre is that of Pope and his school, the spirit of Goldsmith's poems is more closely akin to that of the

poetry which was soon to follow. Let the student compare *The Deserted Village* with Pope's *Windsor Forest*, taking, for example, lines 35–50 and 113–136 of Goldsmith's poem for comparison with lines 7–42 and 111–158 of Pope's. The superior naturalness and sincerity of the later poet will not be difficult to detect. Yet the details of local description and of characterization in Goldsmith's poems must not be interpreted too literally. The poet has idealized his subjects throughout, and fancy has brightened the colors which transform the rude Irish hamlet of Lissoy into this charming picture of

"Sweet Auburn, loveliest village of the plain."

Goldsmith's portraitures may well be compared with those of Chaucer's immortal pilgrims, although the blunt realism of the first great English poet is remote enough from the elegant idealism of this later minstrel.

Concerning *The Vicar of Wakefield*, more remains to be said elsewhere; it must not be overlooked by the student of Goldsmith's works, for it is one of the classics of English fiction.[1] *She Stoops to Conquer* stands, with Sheridan's *School for Scandal* and *The Rivals*, one of the very best of acting comedies on the English stage.

In every one of his works — and there are many not enumerated here — the warm heart and quick sympathy, the gracious humor, the sweet and wholesome charity for all of human kind, reveal in various expression the amiable spirit of this easy-going, generous man. While there is no marked originality in the compositions of Oliver Goldsmith, his style was his own, and the winning charm of his personality pervades his work. It was honest criticism as well as affectionate friendship that found expression in Johnson's stately Latin epitaph on the dead poet: —

"Nullum fere scribendi genus non tetigit,
Nullum quod tetigit non ornabit."

[1] See page 279. An edition of this novel is published by Houghton, Mifflin and Company.

The *Life of Goldsmith* by J. Foster is the standard authority. Washington Irving and Sir Walter Scott each wrote his biography. In the *English Men of Letters Series* the *Goldsmith* is by William Black, and Austin Dobson is the author of the *Life* in the *Great Writers Series*. Macaulay's *Essay*, and the chapter which treats of Goldsmith in Thackeray's *English Humourists*, should not be overlooked.

Contemporary with Johnson and Goldsmith, contributing with them to the wealth of eighteenth century prose, were many writers of important rank. David Hume, a Scotch advocate, born in Edinburgh in 1711, was the first to attempt a comprehensive, accurate history of England. By the publication of various essays upon philosophy and morals, Hume had already become known as a keen, hard-headed reasoner of the utilitarian school when, in 1752, he formed the design of writing the history with which his name is associated. The first volume of Hume's *England* appeared in 1754; the work was completed in 1761. The historian had aimed to produce an interesting book; in this purpose he succeeded. The *History* is famous for its elegance and smoothness of style. But Hume was a strong partisan of Tory interests, and his political prejudice is obvious, particularly in his defense of the Stuarts. Our chief interest in the work is due to the fact that here we find for the first time an intelligent study of politics and an attempt to give an account of the people and manners of an age.

David Hume, 1711-76.

Gibbon, the greatest of English historians, was born at Putney. His career as a student, first at Westminster School and later at Oxford, was extremely unsatisfactory. In the course of much desultory reading, however, young Gibbon

Edward Gibbon, 1737-94.

absorbed with great interest the facts of oriental history.

"The dynasties of Assyria and Egypt were my top and cricket-ball," he says; "and my sleep has been disturbed by the difficulty of reconciling the Septuagint with the Hebrew computation."

Gibbon's love of historical study was further stimulated by subsequent study (during a residence in Lausanne, Switzerland) and by a trip to Italy in 1764.

"It was at Rome," he writes, "on the 15th October, 1764, as I sat musing among the ruins of the Capitol, while the barefooted friars were singing vespers in the Temple of Jupiter, that the idea of writing the decline and fall of the city first started to my mind."

But it was not until 1776 that he published, at London, the first volume of his stately work. Volumes II. and III. appeared in 1781; and six years afterward, at Lausanne, the three later volumes were completed.

The Decline and Fall.

Gibbon's *History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* covers the period beginning with the reign of Trajan, 98 A. D., and ending with the fall of Constantinople in 1453. The skepticism of its author regarding the authorities upon Christian history occasions an attitude objectionable in the minds of many readers; but it should not be forgotten that this same skeptical attitude toward the evidence of ancient authority is the very quality which sustains the historical accuracy of Gibbon — "the one historian of the eighteenth century," as Freeman declares, "whom modern research has neither set aside nor threatened to set aside." The prose style of the *Decline and Fall* is most eloquent. History, in Gibbon's conception, is a great panorama of momentous events; and this succession of impressive scenes he presents in pic-

tures glowing with color. His style is that of the orator; his diction, like that of Johnson, is largely Latin — weighty, sonorous.[1]

Richard Brinsley Sheridan, author of two of the best comedies on the English stage, was born in Dublin. In *The Rivals* (1775) he created the great comic characters, Bob Acres, Sir Lucius O'Trigger, and Mrs. Malaprop. He acquired possession of Drury Lane Theatre in 1776, and the next year produced *The School for Scandal*, his best play. A third comedy, *The Critic*, was written in 1779. Sheridan became a member of parliament in 1780, and achieved a brilliant reputation as an orator. He afterward met with reverses and died in poverty.

Richard Brinsley Sheridan, 1751-1816.

By far the man of largest mould at the close of the century was Edmund Burke, the essayist and parliamentarian, greatest of English political writers, the one whom Dr. Johnson termed the first man in the House of Commons because he was the first man everywhere. Burke was an Irishman and was born in Dublin. He was educated at Trinity, but failed to carry off any special honors. In 1750 he became a law student in London, but appeared to be fonder of travel and literature than of the law. He published his first essays in 1756: the first, *A Vindication of Natural Society*, a satirical reply to Bolingbroke's attack on established religion; the second, *A Philosophical Inquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful.* This last essay was at least indicative of the young law clerk's interest for æsthetics. Edmund Burke had the soul of a poet; his imaginative power, expressing itself in bursts of profound feeling, is the essential element in his oratory which brought him fame.

Edmund Burke, 1729-97.

[1] The interesting *Memoirs* of Gibbon are edited by O. F. Emerson in the *Athenæum Press Series* (Ginn).

Parliamentary Career.

In 1765 Burke became secretary to the prime minister, and the next year entered the House of Commons for Wendover in Buckinghamshire. In Parliament Burke's career was distinguished by his vigorous championship of the American colonies. His *Speech on Conciliation with America* (1775) is a familiar classic in all American schools. Burke next became interested in matters relating to abuses of power by government officials in India, and finally conducted the celebrated but unsuccessful case for impeachment against Warren Hastings — the case which supplied Macaulay with the theme of one of his most picturesque essays. In his *Reflections on the French Revolution* (1790) and the *Letter on a Regicide Peace* (1796), Burke was again upon the unpopular side, bitterly, almost brutally, denouncing the principles of the Revolutionists. His attitude caused a rupture with his party and the breaking of old associations with his friends among the Whigs. It was proposed that Burke be raised to the peerage as Earl of Beaconsfield, but these plans were frustrated by his death.

As a Man of Letters.

In the field of state politics Burke was a philosopher. He had a clear view of every subject upon which he moved. His grasp of minute details was extraordinary; the range of his knowledge, marvelous. In the expression of ideas the statesman turned poet. Figures of rhetoric became a part of the machinery by which he impressed — not merely adorned — his argument. The prose of no English writer is richer in those rhetorical beauties which are commonly regarded as ornaments of style. Metaphor follows metaphor, in long passages of eloquent periods, until, sometimes, the idea of the image almost buries the idea of the speech; but such extravagance is not common,

published in 1751, is the climax of the meditative, or "melancholy," verse of the first half of the eighteenth century. In itself the *Elegy* is not wholly a romantic poem, but its tone is not discordant to the new school.

Gray's mind belonged to that reflective, serious type portrayed in Milton's *Il Penseroso;* the pensive, melancholy spirit dominated his life as well as his verse, and nature developed in him the romantic character. As a schoolboy at Eton he appeared studious and shy; at Cambridge his melancholy grew habitual. His experiences with life confirmed Gray in this soberness of spirit. In 1742 he wrote the graceful but dispirited *Ode on a Distant Prospect of Eton College*, with its familiar close: —

> "Where ignorance is bliss
> 'T is folly to be wise."

Gray's Elegy.

At about this time he began the composition of the *Elegy*. For five or six years he lived the life of a scholar, almost that of a recluse, at Cambridge, devoting himself to the classics. His home was nominally at Stoke Poges, a beautiful village near Windsor, where his mother and sister were living; and here, in 1750, he finished the poem upon which rests his fame. It was printed in 1751 to forestall an unauthorized publication. The *Elegy* is apparently the best-known poem in the language. For perfection of form and finish it is unsurpassed. A wonderful unity of feeling pervades the poem, of which the keynote is struck in the opening line, —

> "The curfew tolls the knell of parting day."

Upon the mind of an appreciative reader the poetical effect of this composition becomes more and more impressive as his acquaintance with literature broadens and his familiarity with the *Elegy* grows.

The Romanticist.

The poet's life was devoted rather to self-culture than to production. Although he held a lectureship in the University, he never lectured. The volume of his poetry is surprisingly thin. *The Progress of Poesy* and *The Bard*, representing his most important work, appeared in 1757. This last poem was essentially romantic. The story of *The Bard* is based upon an ancient Welsh tradition of Edward I.'s conquest of that country. As Edward's army is winding through a deep valley, the march is suddenly interrupted by the appearance of a venerable figure seated on the summit of an inaccessible rock. The aged bard denounces the king for all the misery which he has brought upon the land, including the cruel death of all the bards who had fallen into Edward's hands, and prophesies that poetic genius shall never be wanting in the island to celebrate virtue and valor or to defy oppression. The bard then leaps from the height and is swallowed in the river at its foot. It will be recognized at once that here is genuine romantic material; indeed this poem is an important landmark in the course of the new movement. Gray's later poems were similar in spirit. *The Fatal Sisters* and *The Descent of Odin* are drawn from Norse legend; *The Death of Hoel* is Welsh in its source.

Influence of Classicism.

Although the poems of Gray were abundantly admired, the taste of his age was against him. The influence of Pope's authority, enforced by the criticism of Johnson, still stamped itself upon the verse that had the vogue and won current fame. Even Goldsmith, whose ideas seem to have been somewhat like those of the new school, was too intimately connected with Johnson to depart from the old methods. He declared against the use of blank verse, and clothed his really romantic idealizations in the classic garb of the couplet.

Yet the development of romanticism was not to be checked. A Highland schoolmaster, James Macpherson (1736–96), published in 1760 some *Fragments of Ancient Poetry . . . Translated from the Gaelic or Erse Language.* In 1762 he published *Fingal, an Ancient Epic Poem in Six Books*, as his translation of the work of Ossian, the ancient bard of his race. More Ossianic fragments appeared in the following year, and a sensational debate arose over the genuineness of these so-called translations. The interest in this romantic revival was further evidenced and wonderfully stimulated by the publication in 1765 of Bishop Percy's famous collections of Scotch and English ballads, known under the title of *The Reliques of Ancient English Poetry*, and five years later the field of romanticism was enlarged by the appearance of Percy's *Northern Antiquities*, a translation from the French of Mallet's *History of Denmark*, which first revealed to Gray the rich treasure of Norse mythology.

The Reliques and the Forgeries.

The popular success of Macpherson's *Fragments* appears to have suggested the publication of several specimens of ancient English verse, by Thomas Chatterton (1752–70). These remarkable poems, attributed to Thomas Rowley, a monk of the fifteenth century, were clearly proved to be forgeries; and this "marvelous boy," as Wordsworth calls him, filled with chagrin and overcome by the disappointments and hardships of his young career, ended his life by suicide, at the age of seventeen. The history of our literature records no other case so strange and pathetic as this.

Very different in spirit from the productions just described, yet essentially an important factor in the romantic movement, was the work of William Cowper. Like Gray, a shy, sensitive youth, the poet seems to

have been foredoomed to dejection and morbid melancholy. In Westminster School he was one of a coterie who cultivated the muse of impromptu verse in games and exercises; but he suffered much from the rough-and-ready life of the public school, and years afterward expressed his distrust of the system: —

William Cowper, 1731-1800.

> "The rude will scuffle through with ease enough,
> Great schools suit best the sturdy and the rough."[1]

Cowper's timidity clung to him through life; one less fitted to grapple with its practical experiences it would be hard to find. Friends secured for the poet an appointment as Clerk of the Journals in the House of Lords; but the ordeal of qualifying, and the thought that he would be obliged to read the records in public, were too much for his mistrustful spirit, and in despair he attempted suicide. For eighteen months he was under treatment in a madhouse, and fits of deep depression were his frequent portion afterward. While under strong Calvinistic influences during his residence at Olney in Buckinghamshire, Cowper composed a large number of hymns contained in the *Olney Collection*. Among the most familiar are the following: *God moves in a mysterious way*, *Oh! for a closer walk with God*, and *There is a fountain filled with blood*.

It is a singular fact that to this super-sensitive and morbidly serious poet we owe one of the liveliest and most entertaining of humorous poems, *The Diverting History of John Gilpin*. One evening in 1782, as we are told, when Cowper was in one of his melancholy moods, the story of Gilpin's ride was related to the poet by his vivacious friend, Lady Austen. Peals of laughter were heard issuing from

John Gilpin.

[1] *Tirocinium; or, a Review of Schools.*

the poet's bedroom during the night, and the next morning the poem was read to the company at breakfast.

To Lady Austen's suggestion also was due the composition of Cowper's most elaborate poem, *The Task*. The significance of its title is explained by the fact that when the poet begged for some "task" to relieve the gloom of his low spirits, that lively lady suggested "The Sofa" as a subject for his verse. In 1785 this long poem in blank verse was completed, and fully established its author's fame. Its characteristics were those of the new school. Cowper's *Task* is removed as far as possible from the conventionalities of the classicists. Naturalness is its charm. After having sung the evolution of the *sofa* in pleasant mock-heroic strain, the poet lets his fancy roam forth among those rural sights and sounds which

The Task.

> "Exhilarate the spirit, and restore
> The tone of languid nature."

By an easy contrast his theme suggests the surpassing attractiveness of nature in her native haunts, and the spirit of his thought is expressed at the end of the First Book in the familiar line, —

> "God made the country, and man made the town."

Scattered through the six books of Cowper's *Task* are many passages of bright description and many features which directly suggest the manner of Wordsworth, the great leader of the natural school at the beginning of the next century.

Cowper's last days were days of gloom. A poem written *On the Receipt of my Mother's Picture* (the poet's mother had died when Cowper was a boy of six) is one of the tenderest and most impressive of his compositions. Another, *The Castaway*, dated one year

before his death, is a striking expression of the hopeless misery of his condition: —

> "No voice divine the storm allay'd,
> No light propitious shone;
> When, snatch'd from all effectual aid,
> We perish'd, each alone:
> But I beneath a rougher sea,
> And whelm'd in deeper gulfs than he."

Robert Burns, 1759-96.

The tendency in English verse was now emphatically toward naturalness of expression, the study of life itself, and a frank sympathy with all human interests. The Revolutionary Period had dawned, and while France furnished the field of immediate struggle between the forces of that intensely dramatic epoch, the ideas and principles of the time were fermenting everywhere in Europe. In England the voices of the poets responded now and then to the new impulse. This spirit spoke in the poetry of Robert Burns.

The national poet of Scotland, nearest of all poets to the heart of the English-speaking world, was the son of an intelligent, high-minded Ayrshire farmer who, with his own hands, had built the clay cabin in which the poet was born. The peasant's son had little to expect in the way of school privileges; but his father believed in the advantages of education and provided what he could. The poet got a brief school training and absorbed the literature of his land. The real inspiration of his genius, perhaps, came from the picturesque personality of old Betty Davidson, a member of the household, whose memory was a storehouse of ballad and legend. To her tales, and to the songs of the housewives, Burns gave a ready ear. The *tunes* of the folk songs rang in his head — homely melodies crooned by mothers to their infants by cottage door or fireside. He whistled them as he followed the plough,

until his own songs came, fairly singing themselves into form, innocent of elaborate art, but in perfect tune with nature and throbbing with the passion of his soul. Never a poet sang with greater spontaneity than Robert Burns; never one looked more keenly or more sanely into the world of living things about him.

> "The simple Bard, rough at the rustic plough;
> Learning his tuneful trade from ev'ry bough." [1]

The Ayrshire Ploughman.

When Burns's father died in 1784, the poet, with his brothers and sisters, tried with ill success to carry on the farm. Then Robert, together with one of the brothers, controlled a small estate, poorly equipped, at Mossgiel; and here he wrote some of his best-known verse. *The Cotter's Saturday Night* is a picture in detail of a typical godly Scotch home — just such an one as that in which his own childhood had been passed. Straight from the soil came the wholesome flavor in the lines *To a Mouse* and those *To a Mountain Daisy*. In 1786 the failure to make profit from the farm, the bitterness of the struggle which provided but the barest living, and the results of certain follies due to his own impulsive, passionate nature, afflicted Burns so acutely that he lost heart and planned to go to Jamaica. To supply means for such an undertaking, his friends suggested collecting and printing the poems already composed. The suggestion was accepted, and in that same year appeared at Kilmarnock the first edition of Burns's poems. Its reception was hearty and enthusiastic. An invitation came urging a visit to Edinburgh, whither the poet went to receive the honors of a literary lion and to publish a later and slightly enlarged edition of his works. The numberless songs of his later years were not collected in any subsequent volume during

[1] *The Brigs of Ayr.*

the poet's life, but appeared in current publications, or circulated, like the old folk ballads themselves, from tongue to tongue.

The Scotch ploughman's "pith o' sense and pride o' worth" were invincible to flattery. When the applause grew faint, Burns turned again to the plough, married Jean Armour, and settled upon a farm at Ellisland in Dumfrieshire. Here again agriculture proved unprofitable and was not continued beyond a year. The influence of friends had secured for the poet an appointment as gauger and exciseman over a district of ten parishes, the duties of this office keeping him much upon the road. It was an unfortunate kindness; for the easy, convivial temper of Burns exposed him to all the harmful influences found in the associations of his office. He was a lusty "flesh and blood" man, possessed by masterful passions. The weakness of self-indulgence was his ruin. Disappointment over his failures, and ill-health — the fruit of his own excesses — clouded his spirits more and more. He died at thirty-seven. The line in *A Bard's Epitaph* he had written of himself: —

> "But thoughtless follies laid him low,
> And stained his name."

The Gift of Robert Burns.

There is no necessity to gloss over the errors of Burns. The poet paid a heavy penalty for his mistakes; and in spite of his weaknesses the world's attitude toward genial "Bobbie" Burns is that of an indulgent and affectionate compassion. His wonderful gift of song remains unrivaled in our later literature, and that inheritance preserves for us the best of Robert Burns. Into his verse the poet flung himself: his patriotism, his blithe humor, the wit of the philosopher, the laugh of the boy. His love songs are tender with emotion, or blaze with the heat

of his passion. In every line he is natural, spontaneous, carelessly indiscreet. The frank expression of his feeling is necessary, inevitable. In his love of nature he pictures exactly what he sees and hears; he is realistic to the last degree. He is impressed by the things that are *alive;* his interest is in birds and beasts and flowers — above all in men. He sympathizes with the revolt against oppression, and the literature of the Revolution produced nothing finer than the ringing appeal of his noble lines: —

> "Then let us pray that come it may
> (As come it will for a' that)
> That Sense and Worth o'er a' the earth
> Shall bear the gree an' a' that!
> For a' that an' a' that,
> It 's comin' yet for a' that,
> That man to man the world o'er
> Shall brithers be for a' that."[1]

Suggestions for Study.

In the study of Burns the selections provided in Number 77 of the *Riverside Literature Series* are excellent. A glossary of Scotch words accompanies this text. The two poems, *The Cotter's Saturday Night* and *Tam O'Shanter*, should be carefully read. It will be easy to recognize in the first resemblances to Gray's *Elegy* and Goldsmith's *The Deserted Village.* Point out some of these correspondences, and also try to see the originality of Burns's own expression and feeling. What is the stanza form of this poem? Why does the poet vary in his dialect between Scotch and English — with what effect? Indicate some of the expressions which illustrate his realism and his naturalness of tone; again point out passages in which imagery and phrasing are more conventional. What is the *moral* of the poem? Of all Burns's poems there is none more characteristic in its hearty, rollicking humor than *Tam O'Shanter.* At the same time, in the midst of its boisterous gayety there are passages of high poetical power,

[1] *Is There for Honest Poverty.*

over which a careless reader may slip half-consciously, swept on by the torrent of furious mirth. Read closely lines 53–78, and study the comparisons and phrasings. Point out personifications and metaphors. Consider the effect secured in lines 73–78 by using the words *rattling*, *blast*, *speedy gleams*, *swallowed*, and the entire verse *Loud, deep, and lang the thunder bellowed.* Commit the entire passage to memory.

What seem to be the characteristic qualities of the poems *To a Mouse* and *To a Mountain Daisy*? Point out the elements that impress you most and tell why they impress you.

Give considerable attention to Burns's songs, especially to *Is There for Honest Poverty*, *John Anderson*, *Duncan Gray*, *Flow Gently*, *Sweet Afton*, *Highland Mary*, *To Mary in Heaven*, *I Love My Jean*, *O Wert Thou in the Cauld Blast*, *A Red, Red Rose*, *Bonnie Doon*, and *Scots Wha Hae wi' Wallace Bled.* It is easy to feel the *lyric* quality in these poems; but try also to appreciate the lightness of the touch and the perfect naturalness of the expression.

Read the *Address to the Unco' Guid*, and weigh the sentiment as well as its application in the poet's own experience.

Carlyle's *Essay on Burns*, and appropriate sections of *Heroes and Hero Worship*, should be read. J. C. Shairp's *Aspects of Poetry* and *On Poetic Interpretation of Nature* (Houghton, Mifflin and Company) may be consulted. The biography of Burns in the *English Men of Letters Series* is also by Shairp. That in the *Great Writers Series* is by Blackie. Burns's *Poems* are published complete in the *Riverside Classics* and (edited by W. E. Henley) in the Cambridge Edition.

The following table presents a chronological review of important eighteenth century literature: —

The Rulers.	Essayists.	Poets.	Novelists.
Queen Anne...	Addison (1672–1719).....	Prior (1664–1721)	Defoe (1661–1731).
(1702–14)....	Steele (1672–1729).....	Gay (1688–1732)	*Robinson Crusoe* (1719).
.....	*The Tatler* (1709–11).....	Pope (1688–1744)	*Moll Flanders* (1721).
George I.....	*The Spectator* (1711–14).....	*Essay on Criticism* (1711).....	*Roxana* (1724).
(1714–27) ...	Swift (1667–1745)	*Essay on Man* (1734).....	Richardson (1689–1761).
.....	*Gulliver's Travels* (1726).....	Thomson (1700–48).....	*Pamela* (1740).
.....	Johnson (1709–84).....	*The Seasons* (1730).....	*Clarissa Harlowe* (1748).
.....	*The Rambler* (1750–52).....	Collins (1721–59).....	*Sir Charles Grandison* (1753).
George II.....	*The Dictionary* (1755).....	*Odes* (1746)	Fielding (1707–54).
(1727–60) ...	Goldsmith (1728–74).....	Gray (1716–71)	*Joseph Andrews* (1742).
.....	*Citizen of the World* (1760)...	*The Elegy* (1751).....	*Tom Jones* (1749).
.....	Hume (1711–76).....	Percy's *Reliques* (1765).....	*Amelia* (1751).
George III.....	*History of England* (1754–61)..	*The Deserted Village* (1770).....	Smollett (1721–71).
(1760–1820)..	Gibbon (1737–94).....	Cowper (1731–1800)	*Roderick Random* (1748).
.....	*Decline and Fall of the Roman*	*The Task* (1785).....	*Peregrine Pickle* (1751).
.....	*Empire* (1776–88).....	Burns (1759–96).....	*Humphrey Clinker* (1771).
.....	Burke (1729–97)	*Poems* (1786)	Sterne (1715–68).
.....	*Thoughts on the Present Discon-*	*The Lyrical Ballads* of Words-	*Tristram Shandy* (1759).
.....	*tents* (1770).....	worth and Coleridge (1798)..	*The Vicar of Wakefield* (1765).

CHAPTER VI

THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

FROM WORDSWORTH TO TENNYSON

I. The New Poetry: Wordsworth, Coleridge.
II. The Romantic Movement in English Fiction: Scott.
III. The Revolutionary Poets: Byron, Shelley.
IV. Romanticism in English Prose: Lamb, De Quincey.
V. The Great Essayists: Macaulay, Carlyle, Ruskin.
VI. Maturity of the English Novel: Dickens, Thackeray, George Eliot.
VII. The Victorian Poets: Browning, Tennyson.

I. THE NEW POETRY: WORDSWORTH, COLERIDGE.

As the new century began its course, the romantic tendencies, which had developed with increasing strength in the verse of Thomson, Gray, Cowper, and Burns, reached their culmination in the new poetry of the modern school. Wordsworth and Coleridge, intimately associated by a friendship significantly influential upon both, are closely associated also in their relation to the romantic movement. It is interesting and also important to note that while contributing equally to the impetus and largeness of that movement, their contributions represent two distinct and even contrasted phases of romantic literature. Simplicity and naturalness found extreme expression in the poetry of Wordsworth; the mystical and weird attracted Coleridge. The imagination of the latter wandered among the fantastic creations of a dream world, mysterious,

William Wordsworth, 1770-1850.
Samuel Taylor Coleridge, 1772-1834.

splendid; Wordsworth, on the other hand, was profoundly responsive to the romantic element in the world of common life. Among English poets he is nature's great interpreter, contemplative, calm, yet prophet-like in the voicing of his message to men.

Wordsworth's Youth.

William Wordsworth was born at Cockermouth, in Cumberland, one of the northern English shires. Here lies the heart of the English Lake Country, proverbial for the beauty and impressiveness of its scenery. Its hills and lakes were around him in his youth; the Derwent, "fairest of all rivers," flowed near the homestead, blending its murmurs with his nurse's song. Wordsworth's school days were spent at Hawkeshead, where he learned to appreciate the homely comforts and simple manners of the cottagers with whom he dwelt, and where he came in closest touch with nature in her wildest and loveliest forms. He roamed the woods alone, climbed the crags, in summer and winter indulged his athletic tastes in all the outdoor sports suited to the season. Even in childhood the poet spirit of the boy was fascinated, awed, by the solitude of forest and mountain, hearing a Voice and feeling a Presence in the mysterious environment of nature's secluded haunts.[1]

Influences of the French Revolution.

The years 1787–91 were passed by Wordsworth at the University of Cambridge. The period was marked by little of significance in the poet's life other than his eager response to the immediate inspiration of the hour. With whole-souled enthusiasm he welcomed the promptings and appeals of the Revolution. Cowper and Burns among English poets had voiced the sentiments of liberty, equality, and universal brotherhood. Southey and Coleridge were

[1] Read the account of the poet's childhood and school times in *The Prelude*, Book i.

prompt to express their sympathy with the cause, and among all the younger men there was none more ardent in his championship than Wordsworth. When a few years later he came to describe, in *The Prelude*, the sensations and emotions of that time, he wrote: —

> "Bliss was it in that Dawn to be alive,
> But to be young was very heaven."

When his university course was finished, the young graduate spent some few months in London, looking on at the multiform life of the capital; but France lured him forth, and in 1792 Wordsworth went to Paris. He viewed the rubbish ruin of the Bastile, then left the disordered city to travel in quieter districts of France. In October of the same year, following the September massacres, cheered by the proclamation of the Republic, he returned to "the fierce metropolis" and ranged the city with new ardor. But the horror of recent events was too great, and the poet was hardly able to throw off the spell. He was inclined to make common cause with the Girondists, but friends at home prevailed upon him to return. Depressed by the failures of the Revolution, melancholy over its crimes, the young enthusiast came again to England, disheartened and doubting. For a time he lost faith and hope; then by the affectionate leading of his only sister, Dorothy Wordsworth, and by Nature's self, the poet was guided into

> "those sweet counsels between head and heart,
> Whence grew that genuine knowledge, fraught with peace."[1]

Back to Nature.

Wordsworth and his sister made a home in the south of England, in Dorset and Somersetshire, until 1798. The quiet of the country, long rambles across the downs, and the charm of rural life

[1] Read the account of the poet's residence in France, and its influence, in *The Prelude*, Book x.

combined to create an atmosphere in which the poet's serener self gradually awoke to the consciousness of its peculiar gift. In 1793 Wordsworth published a slight volume of *Descriptive Sketches*. In 1797 Coleridge came to visit him at Racedown; and the acquaintance which had been previously formed ripened into friendship, intimate and life-long.

Coleridge.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge was born in Ottery, St. Mary's, in Devonshire. Precocious and imaginative, he passed the years of childhood without experiencing the thoughts or exhibiting the actions of a child. At Christ's Hospital, a charity school, where he found a classmate and comrade in young Charles Lamb, Coleridge won distinction as a scholar. He was deeply interested in metaphysics, was given also to day-dreams and to poetry. In 1791 he entered the University of Cambridge, and soon became well known for his radical views. With the extreme ideas of the revolutionary movement he appeared to be in hearty sympathy. A Utopian scheme to establish an ideal community somewhere on the banks of the Susquehanna enlisted the active coöperation of both Coleridge and Southey, but this dream of a new Pantisocracy, as they called it, did not materialize. Coleridge now turned seriously to writing and lecturing as his vocation. In 1795 he married and settled at Clevedon in Somersetshire. He next appeared as the editor of a radical publication called *The Watchman*, which came to an end with the tenth number; he was often heard discoursing upon political and economic questions in the pulpits of Unitarian chapels. In 1797 he moved to Nether Stowey, and was living there when the intimacy with Wordsworth began.

In spite of some essential differences in theory and method, these two poets were attracted to each other by

a very definite agreement in sympathies and ideals. They determined to combine their forces; and as a result of their plans there appeared in 1798 the volume of *Lyrical Ballads*. No more significant collection of poems was ever published. In accordance with the plan adopted, poems were included illustrating the theory of each writer. It was Wordsworth's purpose to show how interest may be aroused by imaginative treatment of the commonplace, while Coleridge sought to make the supernatural impressively real through the truthfulness of the emotions awakened. Most significant of Wordsworth's contributions were the simple narrative poems, such as *Margaret* (afterward incorporated in *The Excursion*), *Expostulation and Reply*, *The Tables Turned*, *Simon Lee*, *The Old Cumberland Beggar*, *The Idiot Boy*, and *Peter Bell*. These compositions aptly illustrated the poet's insistent principle of simplicity in form and diction — some of them extravagantly. One or two of the poems rose measurably above the rest; the unmistakable note of a great genius was struck in the splendid *Lines, Composed a Few Miles above Tintern Abbey*. Coleridge was represented in the volume by that unique masterpiece of weirdness and melody, *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*. In spite of their significance the new poems were received with ridicule, if not with contempt. A scattered few rose to the appreciation and enjoyment of the work.

The Lyrical Ballads.

Coleridge and the Wordsworths now went abroad — Coleridge to become absorbed in German metaphysics, Wordsworth and his sister to pass a quiet, almost lonely winter in the little town of Goslar. Here the poet composed new ballads, including *Lucy Gray*, *Ruth*, and *Nutting;* he also wrote some of the passages which appeared later in *The Prelude*.

In the spring of 1799 the Wordsworths arrived again in England; and as a result of a pedestrian tour in Cumberland, taken together with Coleridge, who also had just returned from Germany, they once more settled in the beautiful Lake region, their early home. The poet and his sister rented a cottage at Grasmere. In 1800 Coleridge removed his household to Keswick, and three years later was joined by the poet Southey. This neighborly association gave rise to the term *the Lake poets*, a title which, beyond indicating a certain sympathy in taste and purpose, has little technical significance. At Grasmere.

At Grasmere, where Wordsworth lived until removing to Rydal Mount in 1813, the poet produced his most impressive verse. A second edition of the *Lyrical Ballads* in 1800 contained a prose preface in which Wordsworth set forth his theory of verse, maintaining that the language of poetry should be that of real life. While the critics continued to ridicule the new poetry and its author's peculiar views, the younger generation of readers was beginning to enjoy the truthfulness and pathos of rustic character and the realistic naturalness of country life and scene as presented in the ballads.

In 1802 the poet married an old schoolmate, his cousin, Mary Hutchinson, —

> "A creature not too bright or good
> For human nature's daily food;
> For transient sorrows, simple wiles,
> Praise, blame, love, kisses, tears and smiles." [1]

Besides the *Sonnets* — some of which rank among our best compositions in this field of verse — the important poems of Wordsworth's maturity are *The Ode to Duty* (1805), the great *Ode on* Subsequent Poems.

[1] *She was a Phantom of Delight* (1804).

the Intimations of Immortality (1806), *The White Doe of Rylstone* (published in 1815), *Laodamia* (1814), and *The Excursion* (1814). This last composition forms only a part in a larger design, which embraced a long philosophical poem to be called *The Recluse*. In this poem the poet purposed to express his views on man, nature, and society. As an introduction to the work, he first wrote *The Prelude* (completed in 1805), an interesting autobiography with particular reference to his mental experiences and philosophical growth. *The Excursion* constitutes the second section of this work, in which various characters are introduced, furnishing a medium through which the poet's views find an expression. Of the main poem, *The Recluse*, intended to express the sensations and opinions of a poet living in retirement, only the first book was completed; and it was not until 1888 that this fragment was published. When *The Excursion* appeared, it was little read; only 500 copies were sold in the next six years. Then, little by little, appreciation grew. In 1815 the poet published his collected works, classifying them as Poems of the Imagination, Poems of the Fancy, Poems of Reflection, etc. Sympathetic readers increased. In 1843, upon the death of Southey, then poet-laureate, Wordsworth was honored with the appointment in his place.

In quiet retirement he lived out the days of a serene and uneventful life. He traveled somewhat, lived much in the open air, and composed industriously. The ardent poet of the Revolution had long since settled down into staid and safe conservatism. He died at the age of eighty, and was buried in his beloved vale of Grasmere.

The actual production of Coleridge's genius was disappointingly small. In the winter of 1797 the poet

wrote the first part of *Christabel* and the wonderfully melodious fragment of *Kubla Khan*, stating that a poem two or three hundred lines in length had been composed by him during sleep, that the fifty-four lines of the fragment were written immediately upon awaking, and that the interruption of a visit had effectually banished the remainder from his memory. This uncompleted poem, together with *Christabel* and *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*, affords a remarkable example of tone effect, the subtle influence of which was understood by Coleridge as, perhaps, by no other English poet. Strongly impressed by the genius of Schiller, Coleridge published, in 1800, a masterly translation of the drama *Wallenstein*. The second part of *Christabel* was written in that same year, and in 1802 he composed the *Ode to Dejection*, almost the last of his important poetical works.

The Later Work of Coleridge.

From 1803 to 1816 Coleridge was almost a wanderer — without a recognized home, absent from his family, dependent upon friends, miserable over his failures, rarely accomplishing an occasional success. His great intellect was handicapped with a weak will, and his infirmity was aggravated by the fact that he had become an unhappy victim to the use of opium. Many important undertakings were planned, to be left half completed or wholly unattempted. *The Friend*, a literary, moral, and political journal, which ran through twenty-seven numbers (1809–10), the lectures on Shakespeare and the poets, the *Biographia Literaria* (1817), in which he analyzed the poetical theories of Wordsworth and published passages from his inimitable *Table Talk*, constitute, with the poems already named, the most important of his contributions to permanent literature. In 1816 Coleridge found an

asylum in the hospitable home of a Mr. Gillman. He lived the life of a speculative student, devoted to the study and interpretation of the German philosopher Immanuel Kant. He died peacefully in 1834.

Wordsworth stands by himself among the poets.

Wordsworth's Place in English Poetry.

While it is common to associate the names of Wordsworth and Burns, the resemblance between the two is one of spirit, not of expression. In many essential points they are wholly unlike. Wordsworth gracefully and adequately describes his obligation to Burns —

> "Whose light I hailed when first it shone,
> And showed my youth
> How Verse may build a princely throne
> On humble truth." [1]

Upon this foundation of "humble truth" the poetry of William Wordsworth was consistently and ever based. The intimate relations between Nature and Man he interpreted as no other poet ever tried to do. Instinctively and without effort, he fell into that blessed mood in which,

> "With an eye made quiet by the power
> Of harmony, and the deep power of joy,
> We see into the life of things." [2]

"Every great poet is a teacher," he declared; "I wish to be considered as a teacher, or as nothing." "To console the afflicted, to add sunshine to daylight by making the happy happier, to teach the young and gracious of every age to see, to think, and feel, and therefore to become more actively and sincerely virtuous," [3] — this he affirmed to be the purpose of his art, and his hope for his verse.

[1] *At the Grave of Burns* (1803).

[2] *Tintern Abbey.*

[3] Letter to Lady Beaumont. See also the sonnet *To B. R. Haydon*, "High is our calling, Friend."

Hence it comes that Wordsworth is always subjective; his poetry is the poetry of meditation and counsel; his studies of nature and of human character are inspired with the idea of inculcating lessons of sympathy and love and faith. After that first turbulence of youthful ardor had given place to the calmer mood, the poet's spiritual life grew simple and serene. He deplored the fact that

"Plain living and high thinking are no more;"

but this suggestive phrase truthfully describes the life he led.

Simplicity is the essential characteristic of Wordsworth's verse, — a simplicity that insists upon spontaneous expression and precludes the artificial elaboration of an elaborate art. **His Choice of Material.**

In his material as well as in his language he chose the common type. Like Chaucer and like Burns, he sang of the field daisy —

"Nun demure of lowly port."

The "little, humble Celandine" receives his praise. The tumultuous harmony of the nightingale is to him a song in mockery; the stock-dove's homely tale contents him: *he*

"Cooed and cooed;
And somewhat pensively he wooed;
He sang of love with quiet blending,
Slow to begin, and never ending;
Of serious faith and inward glee;
That was the song — the song for me!"[1]

In humble homes and hearts Wordsworth discovered elements that command respect and call forth admiration; hence almost all his narrative pieces illustrate and interpret some phase of the quiet life. He was oftenest impressed by the pathetic annals of the

[1] *O Nightingale! thou surely art.*

poor, and found a helpful lesson in the simplest tale. Michael, the Grasmere shepherd,

> "An old man, stout of heart, and strong of limb,"

bowed, but not crushed by his burden, proves that there is a comfort in the strength of love. The ancient leech-gatherer on the weary moor, searching muddy pools for his slimy spoil, replies cheerily to the poet's queries: —

> "Once I could meet with them on every side;
> But they have dwindled long by slow decay;
> Yet still I persevere, and find them where I may.
> . . . . . .
> I could have laughed myself to scorn to find
> In that decrepit Man so firm a mind.
> 'God,' said I, 'be my help and stay secure;
> I'll think of the Leech-gatherer on the lonely moor.'"[1]

The histories of *Margaret* and *Ruth*, the simple narratives of *Lucy Gray* and *Alice Fell*, reflect the poet's ready sympathy in all the sorrows of the weak and young. As might be expected, Wordsworth took an intense interest in the unconscious wisdom of a child.

Nature.

The great significance of Wordsworth's work is found in his attitude to nature. He does not merely describe her forms, nor does he study her various processes. To him nature is alive with an informing spirit which ever instructs, chastens, and elevates the thoughtful mind. Her kindlier phases impress him wholly; and thus the lessons that he brings are those of assurance, calmness, inspiration, and hope.

> "The Being that is in the clouds and air,
> That is in the green leaves among the groves,
> Maintains a deep and reverential care
> For th' unoffending creatures whom he loves."[2]

It was natural that a soul so susceptible should feel the mystical power of nature's vital forces, — "the liv-

[1] *Resolution and Independence.*
[2] *Hart-Leap Well.*

ing Presence of the Earth." [1] Even in his youth he was conscious of this influence.[2] His poetry is full of allusions to the Vision and the Voice. A curious child listens to the murmurings of a smooth-lipped shell; and the poet exclaims: —

> "Even such a shell the universe itself
> Is to the ear of Faith; and there are times,
> I doubt not, when to you it doth impart
> Authentic tidings of invisible things." [3]

In the enthusiasm of revolt against the conventional and artificial forms of the classic school, Wordsworth's early ballads are aggressive in their naïve simplicity of style. There are many prosy passages of dubious verse in his later and longer compositions. And at the same time, allowing for his obvious limitations in breadth of expression and of view, we recognize a sane mind and a wealth of wonderful poetry in Wordsworth's collected works. Among the many definitions at various times attempted for that elusive term *poetry*, there is one by Stedman which is as follows: —

"Poetry is rhythmical, imaginative language, expressing the invention, taste, thought, passion, and *insight* of the human soul." [4]

The suggestiveness of this definition is particularly helpful in estimating Wordsworth's place. For elevation, serenity, and insight there are few compositions that surpass *Tintern Abbey*, *Laodamia*, the *Ode to Duty*, *The Intimations of Immortality*, and *The Excursion*.

[1] *The Recluse.*

[2] "Oh ye rocks and streams,
And that still spirit shed from evening air!
Even in this joyous time I sometimes felt
Your presence." — *The Prelude*, Book i.

[3] *The Excursion*, Book iv.

[4] *The Century Magazine*, April, 1894. A lecture delivered at Columbia University.

Suggestions for Study.

Poetical expression at the close of the eighteenth century had become a very different thing from what it was at the beginning. The first aim, therefore, in the study of Wordsworth's verse should be to recognize the direction and value of the progress that had been made. To understand this, examine a few of the early ballads, in which simplicity of thought and naturalness of expression are strongly emphasized. Note the sort of subject which predominates, and think how far removed from Pope's conception of nature "methodised" is Wordsworth's

"Simple Nature trained by careful Art."

It is not necessary to impute a large intrinsic value to all the representative compositions of the early period, but the sincerity and spontaneity are worthy of appreciation. Perhaps the happiest illustration of Wordsworth's method successfully applied is found in that little classic of childhood, *We are Seven*.

We are Seven. The first stanza, containing the real thought of this simple tale, was suggested by Coleridge. The significance of the poem is, of course, its absolutely harmonious treatment of an entirely simple, yet impressive theme, — the inability of a child to comprehend the meaning of death. The ballad measure lends itself naturally to its development. The simple language, the colloquialisms, are in keeping; the stockings and the kerchief, even the little porringer, are not unnecessary adjuncts. But the poetical effectiveness — that which makes of the composition a true poem — is the artless pathos of the little maid's reply, so naturally and truthfully interpreted by a sympathetic mind.

Tintern Abbey. The first important example of Wordsworth's real genius was the poem composed near Tintern Abbey, the remarkable *Lines on Revisiting the Banks of the Wye*. Study the composition with reference to its theme, the spiritual effect of personal communion with nature. First analyze the poem. The introduction (lines 1–22) describes the return of the poet to this favored spot. What is the general subject of the passage which follows (lines 23–49)?

In the third section of the poem (lines 49–111) trace the development recorded through what Dowden has termed the periods "of the blood, of the senses, of the imagination, of the soul." How is each described? To whom does the poet address himself in the conclusion? Does the composition gain as a whole through this personal address?

The poem should now be read with careful reference to technical and artistic details. The blank-verse form should be considered. How does it comport with the general seriousness and dignity of the theme? In structure of verse, disposition of pause, variation of rhythm, points of effective technique may be noted. A comparison may be made with passages in *Paradise Lost* and *The Task*. What is the effect of a comparison with the heroic couplet used by Pope?

Next examine the diction of this poem. It will be found that the simplicity of these *Lines* is more impressive than that oftenest found in the ballads. It is elemental and upon a different plane. The "language of prose" gives place to the language of poetry; a powerful imagination, powerfully excited, supplies the tropes and comparisons here introduced. Analyze the picture of the quiet landscape described in the opening lines. What points in that description emphasize the quiet seclusion of the scene? How is its tranquilizing influence projected in the following passage? What is the significance of the allusion to "that best portion of a good man's life" (lines 30–35)? Note each word used in the lines which follow and its individual aptness to the thought; the compact suggestiveness of these lines is extraordinary.

As opposed to the idea of quiet calm induced by the natural influences of the scene, what phrases does the poet use to suggest the "fretful stir" of common life? Examine closely the language of the poet in the description of his youthful passion for nature; what is the appropriateness of such phrases as "aching joys," "dizzy raptures"? Commit to memory the passage beginning "For I have learned" (lines 88–102). Weigh the thought. Consider the force of each word in these lines: —

> "The still sad music of humanity,
> Nor harsh nor grating, though of ample power
> To chasten and subdue."

Follow on with the next line — and the next. Read them aloud. These passages belong to the "grand style" of genius, whether it be called Shakespearian, Miltonic, or Wordsworthian.

Ode on the Intimations of Immortality. This poem, which Emerson characterized as "the high-water mark which the intellect has reached in this age," is not an argument but a reminder of this early consciousness and an enforcement of the common faith. The theme of the *Ode*, suggested in *We are Seven*, is the idea that the sense of immortality is incident to the conceptions of childhood; that with development toward maturity this sense is more and more obscured, until it remains only in the dim recollection of what once was. The poem begins with a lyric passage (stanzas i.–iv.) descriptive of the poet's early sympathy with nature — the experience reflected in so many of his compositions. The tone of melancholy is emphasized through contrast with the joyousness of children and the brightness of Nature herself: yet all repeat the tale; the vision and the glory have fled. What is it that has disappeared? The following section (stanzas v.–ix.) contains the philosophical development of the theme; trace its development. Stanza vii., parenthetically illustrating the poet's theory, appears to have been suggested by young Hartley Coleridge, the poet's oldest child. The significance of this illustration does not appear until the question, "Why with such earnest pains?" (stanza viii.). What then is its application here? Notice now the change of tone from regret to satisfaction as the poet advances (stanza ix.) the real thought of the *Ode*. Though fugitive and doubtful, these shadowy recollections

> "Are yet the fountain light of all our day,
> Are yet a master light of all our seeing;
> Uphold us, cherish, and have power to make
> Our noisy years seem moments in the being
> Of the eternal Silence."

The further application of this poetical idea is continued (stanzas x., xi.), and the poem ends with the note of conviction and gratitude. The *Ode* reveals an intense imagination expressing itself in a succession of exalted and impassioned figures. It gleams with

"The light that never was on sea or land."

It was not Wordsworth's intention seriously to teach the doctrine of preëxistence, but to emphasize poetically one phase of our instinctive confidence in immortality.

Read the poems referred to in the sketch of Wordsworth's life. Compare *Michael*, a pastoral poem, with one of Pope's *Pastorals*. Of the sonnets, study the following: *The World is too much with us, It is a Beauteous Evening Calm and Free, Composed on Westminster Bridge, To B. R. Haydon, Milton.* Compare these sonnets with those of Milton and Shakespeare: what distinction do you find in Wordsworth's? Of the lyrical poems, read especially *The Solitary Reaper, The Primrose of the Rock, The Grave of Burns.* Read at least Book i. of *The Excursion.* **Further Reading.**

Among the texts of Wordsworth's poems, The Globe Edition, edited by John Morley, is especially mentioned. For classroom study, the *Selections from Wordsworth* edited, with an essay, by Matthew Arnold, in the *Golden Treasury Series*, and the *Selections* edited by Edward Dowden (Ginn) are recommended. Number 76 of the *Riverside Literature Series* contains the *Ode on the Intimations of Immortality* and a number of the shorter poems. Knight's *Life* (Macmillan, 3 vols.) is a standard biography; Myers's *Wordsworth*, in the *English Men of Letters Series*, is a good brief biography. *The Prelude* itself is an interesting autobiographical poem, and should not be overlooked. The essays on Wordsworth by James Russell Lowell (*Among my Books*) and by Walter Pater are themselves literature, and should be read. Augustus H. Strong's *The Great Poets and their Theology* contains an analysis of Wordsworth's teaching. An edition of Wordsworth's *Prose Prefaces*, **Brief Bibliography.**

edited by A. J. George (Heath), will be found helpful to an understanding of the poet's theory of versification.

Robert Southey, 1774-1843.

Closely associated in friendly relations with Wordsworth and Coleridge, and often included with them as one of the Lake poets so called, was Robert Southey, who settled at Greta Hall, Keswick, in 1803 and there made his home until his death. Southey was born at Bristol, the son of a linen draper. While a student at Balliol College, Oxford, he caught the fever of radical republicanism like the other young enthusiasts of that revolutionary age. Here he was visited by Coleridge and joined in the scheme to found a Pantisocracy on the Susquehanna, as described in the sketch of Coleridge.

While a student he wrote much mediocre verse, including a poetical drama, *Wat Tyler*, extremely radical in character and published, to the poet's annoyance, surreptitiously in 1817. His *Joan of Arc*, a spirited rendering of Schiller's great play, appeared in 1795, an offering to the revolutionary movement and expressive of its author's sympathy with the cause. After an unsuccessful attempt at the study of medicine, and a similar failure in the study of law, Southey settled down to a life of industrious, incessant authorship. As a poet he never rose to the level of his two famous contemporaries, although his romantic poems, *Thalaba* (1801), *Madoc* (1805), *The Curse of Kehama* (1810), and *Roderick* (1814) were, at least in part, successful enough to win him the honor of the laureateship in 1813. His *Life of Nelson*, completed in that same year, is one of our best biographies; and other of his narrative essays raise Southey to a high rank among prose writers. More methodical in his habits than some of his more gifted friends, his hospitable home sheltered

the family of Coleridge and that of one other enthusiast in the Pantisocratic circle. Many honors and some wealth came to the poet in his later years, but his literary fame rests rather upon the rich qualities of his prose than upon his verse, which to-day is but little read.

II. THE ROMANTIC MOVEMENT IN ENGLISH FICTION: SCOTT.

Beginnings.

The first indications of a romantic tendency in English fiction are found in a few works of the later eighteenth century novelists, among whom Horace Walpole (1717–97), the intimate friend of the poet Gray, and Mrs. Anne Radcliffe (1774–1823) are foremost. *The Castle of Otranto*, written by the former in 1764, was so far beyond the bounds of reason as to have suggested, and not unplausibly, that its author, a man of taste and leisure, had intended his production as a satire rather than a novel. Howbeit, we have here a tale of sights and sounds uncanny; dismal corridors echo to unearthly groans; portraits speak; underground passages form an important part of the machinery of the plot. The prominent characters disappear mysteriously, and as unexpectedly reappear. There is in the castle courtyard a gigantic helmet whose black plumes nod ominously when messengers approach the place. The story purports to describe the manners of the feudal period. With its crudity and extravagance, the novel stands as the first example of the so-called gothic romance in our literature. A stronger work than Walpole's romance is *The History of the Caliph Vathek*, by William Beckford. While more extraordinary in its wildness of fancy than *The Castle of Otranto*, the oriental setting of *Vathek*, its remarkable likeness to some tale among the thousand and one of the *Arabian*

Nights, above all, its careful consistency in the situations and characters of the plot, have given to this tale a length of life shared by no other of these fantastic romances. The book was written in French while Beckford was traveling on the continent, and an English translation was published without permission in 1784. The climax of gothic romanticism was reached in the work of Mrs. Radcliffe, who published during the years 1789–97 five novels of mystery and terror, of which *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794) was considered the most impressive in its day. Under the influence of this weird tale, Matthew Gregory Lewis published *The Monk* in 1795, a novel which became extremely popular and fixed its writer's name as "Monk" Lewis ever after. Lewis was strongly impressed by German romanticism; he had met Goethe and had translated Schiller's *Kabale und Liebe* for the English stage. He wrote *The Castle Spectre*, a musical drama, and an opera entitled *Adelmorn the Outlaw*. One of his best novels, *The Bravo of Venice* (1804), was based upon the robber drama, *Abellino*, of the German romanticist Zschokke. William Godwin's *Caleb Williams* (1794) followed the method of the gothic romance, but subordinated its romanticism to a didactic purpose; it embodied the spirit of the Revolution and was intended as a protest against the existing social order.

These were the first expressions of the romantic movement in English fiction. It was not until the advent of Walter Scott that the romance proper reached the high level it has since maintained.

Walter Scott was born in Edinburgh, August 15, 1771. His father, whose name was also Walter, was a Writer to the Signet, or attorney at law. His paternal ancestry contained many famous names. Walter

Scott, great grandfather of the novelist, was identified with the cause of the Stuarts, and it was from him, perhaps, that Sir Walter inherited that sentiment for the same cause so evident in his work. Scott's father was a dignified and somewhat formal personage. He is portrayed in *Redgauntlet* in the character of Alexander Fairford. The mother of the novelist was Anne Rutherford Scott, daughter of a professor in the University of Edinburgh. She was well educated, a woman of kindly nature and warm heart.

Walter Scott, 1771-1832.

Walter was the ninth of twelve children, and although unusually strong and athletic when a man, he was sickly as a child. When two and a half years old, he was taken to his grandfather's farm at Sandyknowe, where he remained under the special care of his grandmother for several years. One of the old servants on the place afterward described him as "a sweet-tempered bairn, a darling with all about the house." Here the child grew rapidly strong; although lame, he could clamber about with agility, and even while very young learned to gallop over the country on a small Shetland pony of his own. Amid such surroundings Scott's taste for the ancient literature of his native Scotland developed early and was fostered by all the circumstances of his environment. Under the direction of his grandmother, whose memory was a treasure house of the past, he learned to read and to recite some of the old border poems, of which he grew passionately fond. On one occasion he declaimed the ballad of *Hardicanute* with such gusto that he quite put out the parish clergyman, who complained that he "might as well speak in a cannon's mouth as where that child was." The vivid imagination of the romancer was manifested in the boy and roused the

Childhood.

astonishment of his friends. A relative of the family saw him when six years old reading to his mother, and describes him thus: "He was reading a poem to his mother when I went in. I made him read on; it was the description of a shipwreck. His passion rose with the storm. 'There 's the mast gone,' says he; 'crash it goes; they will all perish.' After his agitation he turns to me. 'That is too melancholy,' says he; 'I had better read you something more amusing.'"

School Days.

In 1779 the eight-year-old lad came back to Edinburgh and was placed in the High School, where he made less of a reputation as a scholar than as a teller of tales to his comrades in the school. The spirit of his rough-and-ready ancestry was not wanting in the youth; he was a good fighter on occasion and bold enough in all boyish adventure. Although, as he says, he "glanced like a meteor from one end of the class to the other," meaning thereby a movement in the wrong direction, it is not to be inferred that he was either a dunce or an idler. With the books that he enjoyed he grew more than familiar. He absorbed the spirit as well as the words of the authors he loved. Something of their enthusiasm and something of their prejudice he assimilated also. Even as a boy Scott was a stanch, unyielding Tory, and took the side of the Cavaliers as against the Roundheads from a conviction that their creed was "the more gentlemanlike" of the two. Such were the characteristics of this precocious lad; it is not difficult to see in them the possibility and promise of a *Marmion* and an *Ivanhoe*.

Professional Career.

About 1785 or 1786 Scott entered his father's office to study law, supplementing his office study with courses in the law school of the University. He worked on thus for six or seven years, with more or less perseverance, though with no great

enthusiasm for his profession. As occasion offered, the young attorney made excursions into the Highlands and met some of the characters afterward introduced in the tales. He also joined the yeomanry, or militia, and thus gained acquaintance with military matters. In 1792 he was admitted to the bar.

On Christmas eve, 1797, the young advocate was married to Miss Charlotte Margaret Carpenter, or Charpentier, as the name originally stood, a lady of French parentage, although reared and educated in England. Soon afterward Scott was made sheriff of Selkirkshire and rented Ashestiel, a country house on the Tweed. In 1806 he assumed the duties of one of the Clerks of Session, but did not enjoy the salary of this office, £1300, until 1811.

Literary Labors.

Scott's entrance upon a literary career began with the publication of some translations from the newer romantic poetry of Germany. In 1799 he published a version of Goethe's *Goetz von Berlichingen*. In 1800 he wrote the *Eve of St. John*, a border ballad, and in 1805 appeared his first poem of note, *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*. This was followed by *Marmion* in 1808, *The Lady of the Lake* in 1810, *The Vision of Don Roderick* in 1811, and *Rokeby* in 1813. But this was not all: along with other poems of lesser note, Scott also did an extraordinary amount of editorial work during this period, including editions, with biographies, of Dryden and Swift. His metrical romances, the best of their kind ever written, made their author the most popular writer of his day. The history of the Scottish borders was rich in material suited to the purpose of the romancer, and Scott, thoroughly familiar with the customs and traditions of his native land, happily endowed with a sentiment and a sympathy for his subject, was remarkably well qualified to

thus revive the spirit of the past. The poet found himself famous and wealthy. In 1811 he bought Abbotsford — forever afterward associated with his name — an estate on the banks of the Tweed about thirty miles from Edinburgh.

The Novels.

In 1812 Lord Byron published the first two cantos of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, and followed these in the next year with *The Giaour* and *The Bride of Abydos*. There was therefore now a new poet in the field. *Rokeby* had not proved so successful as the earlier poems, and after two further ventures in *The Bridal of Triermain*, 1813, and *The Lord of the Isles*, 1815, Scott quietly withdrew from the field of verse and opened a vein of imaginative creation the like of which had never before been discovered in English literature. In 1814 appeared *Waverley; or, 'Tis Sixty Years Since*, a novel of manners and adventure in Scotland during the period indicated by the title. This was indeed an event in English letters, and the "author of Waverley," who rigorously concealed his identity, until secrecy finally became impossible, found himself for a second time the success of the hour. *Guy Mannering* followed in 1815, "the work of six weeks at Christmas time;" then came in quick succession *The Antiquary*, *The Black Dwarf*, *Old Mortality*, all in 1816, *Rob Roy*, *The Heart of Midlothian*, 1817, *The Bride of Lammermoor*, and *The Legend of Montrose*, 1819. During this last year the novelist suffered intensely with a malady of the stomach which caused an agony of pain, "but," as he wrote afterward to a friend with reference to his sufferings at this time, "I have no idea of these things preventing a man from doing what he has a mind." When *The Bride of Lammermoor* was completed, however, Scott declared that he did not recollect one single incident, character, or

conversation it contained, so severe and so continuous had been the pain which had tormented him throughout its dictation.

The year 1819 marks a slight departure in Scott's selection of subjects. Hitherto he had confined himself to the field of Scottish history and Scottish character, a field where he felt himself perfectly at home; he now tried an "experiment on a subject purely English," and with gratifying success. *Ivanhoe*, if not the greatest, is probably the most popular of all his works. As a romance of chivalry, picturesque, brilliant, absorbing, vivid in its portrayal of the jarring adjustment of Norman and Saxon, *Ivanhoe* remains, in spite of the criticism inspired by the melodrama of its action, unsurpassed by any work of fiction with which it can be appropriately compared. No one impressed by the scope of the imagination displayed in its pages, the rapidity of its movement, or its freshness of tone would suspect that the author while engaged upon its creation was racked with physical pain; yet such was the fact, for at the time of its creation Scott was still a sufferer from the malady already referred to. Ivanhoe.

In 1820 Scott was made a baronet, the first person thus honored by George IV. after his accession to the throne. At Abbotsford he lived the life of a Scottish laird, hospitable, industrious, busying himself with official duties and displaying a capacity for work that has hardly been equaled. Along with memoirs, essays, and translations continued to appear the successive volumes of the Waverley novels, including *Kenilworth*, 1821, *The Pirate*, *The Fortunes of Nigel*, and *Peveril of the Peak*, 1822, *Quentin Durward*, 1823, *St. Ronan's Well* and *Redgauntlet*, 1824, *The Betrothed* and *The Talisman*, 1825, and *Woodstock*, 1826. Later Years.

This last year was a disastrous one for the Laird. In 1805 he had become a silent partner in the printing and publishing firm of the Ballantynes; he was also financially involved with Constable, the publisher of the novels. There was evident mismanagement on all sides, and in 1826 both firms collapsed, leaving Sir Walter under a load of debt which he bore heroically till his death. The amount of the obligations assumed by Scott was about £130,000. He turned over to trustees his property at Abbotsford and set bravely to work to discharge the debt. He was fifty-five years old and subject to the attacks of a new disorder, which struck at the brain and eventually caused paralysis. The story of the next few years is full of pathos. Within two years' time he had earned nearly £40,000, £18,000 having come from the sales of a *Life of Napoleon Bonaparte*. In February, 1830, the novelist had a stroke of paralysis, but still he struggled on at his task. On September 23, 1831, too late to regain his shattered health, Scott left Abbotsford for a trip to Italy, seeking rest. He sailed from Portsmouth for the Mediterranean upon a frigate placed by the Government at his disposal, visited Malta, Naples, and Rome, and then began to long for home. In May the party started to return, traveling down the Rhine to Rotterdam, where the almost dying man was placed on an English steamboat, arriving in London, June 13, 1832. Here he rallied and, though very weak, at his urgent desire was brought home to Abbotsford, recognizing familiar scenes and greeting with a cry of delight the first view of its cherished towers. Foremost among the old friends eager to extend a greeting were his favorite dogs, and Sir Walter smiled or sobbed as they fawned about him and licked his hand.

Scott lived two months after his return. On Sep-

tember 17, in an interval of consciousness, he called his son-in-law to the bedside and said: "Lockhart, I may have but a minute to speak to you. My dear, be a good man — be virtuous — be religious — be a good man. Nothing else will give you any comfort when you come to lie here." Four days later, September 21, 1832, Sir Walter died. He was buried in Dryburgh Abbey, where for many generations his ancestors had been laid. His death was regarded as a national loss, and unprecedented honors were paid to his memory.

The terrible task, under the strain of which he at last succumbed, was not accomplished during the novelist's lifetime, although by his sacrificing labor the debt was reduced more than one half in the six years of ceaseless toil. The remainder of the debt was more than covered by the royalties from his books, and within a few years after his death Sir Walter's account was clear.

Suggestions for the Study of a Novel.

IVANHOE. First of all, let the fact be emphasized that the novel or romance is created primarily not to be made an object of study, but to afford pleasure to its reader. In some works of fiction the purpose to entertain is more obvious than in others. In *Ivanhoe*, as in all of Scott's novels, that purpose is paramount, and our first reading of it should not be so minutely attentive to technical features that we shall be robbed of our entertainment and lose what was intended by the author — our pleasure in the *story*. And yet, as a matter of fact, that enjoyment will naturally be intensified if at the same time we feel the value of the work as a whole and note here and there the evidence of skillful construction and artistic effect. These waymarks of genius we may be conscious of as we pass, and a more careful examination will increase our appreciation and heighten our pleasure. Herein is the justification for subsequent study of the work, a study which should result not only in a more intense feeling of the effects designed, but also to a greater or less degree in the apprehension of how those effects have been achieved.

The Setting and the Situation.

In the study of any novel we may begin by noting the *setting* and the *situation*. The first has to do with the general environment, the characteristics of time and place, the date and scene of action; the second deals with the conditions which involve the principal persons in the narrative, and presents the groundwork or starting-point from which the story springs. Either of these may be placed before the reader first, or something of both may be made to appear, the details of each unfolding coincidently. In what we may call the Introduction of *Ivanhoe*, the principal points of the *setting* are clearly and briefly given in the first five paragraphs of chapter i.; and although, in the paragraphs following, some further details are added which make more vivid the political and social order of the kingdom, it transpires that these further facts are given as necessary to our knowledge of the *situation*. Thus Wamba's discourse upon the meats reveals something of the relative position of Norman and Saxon, together with the personal relations naturally existing between them; and this constitutes a most important force in the development of the romance. The allusions to Cedric and Front-de-Bœuf are incidental to the situation, for these persons are prominent in the story. With the introduction of the Prior and the Templar (chapter ii.) our acquaintance with the situation grows; the personal allusions to Cedric, Rowena, and particularly the mention of the son banished "for lifting his eyes in affection" toward the lady, are most important. In chapter iii. the utterance of Cedric concerning Wilfred, and the statement of Rowena's interest in news from Palestine, confirm the assertion of the Prior; while the lady's championship of Ivanhoe (chapter v.), and the description of the Palmer's nocturnal visit to Rowena, make our understanding of the situation complete. Lady Rowena is obviously the heroine of the novel; between herself and the absent Ivanhoe exists an attachment the progress of which is hindered by the hostility of the arbitrary Thane who has disowned his son, and which is also threatened by the hate of the Knight Templar, who from the outset assumes the part of

an evil element in the story just opening. The situation also involves the peculiar social antagonisms of Norman and Saxon, the pretensions of Prince John, and the cause of King Richard; while the reception accorded to Isaac of York, and his interview with the Palmer, indicate that he also has a part to play in the romance.

The Plot.

The situation once made clear, we are in a position to follow with greater interest the development of the story, and this development is made manifest in the working out of what is called the *plot*. This last is nothing more than the thread of logical connection on which are strung the happenings that furnish the forces, the motives, and the action necessary to the growth of the story. In some novels the plot is simple; few characters are involved, the motives are plain, a single idea commands our interest. Here in *Ivanhoe* a half dozen important personages demand attention at the start and as many more appear later as secondary yet prominent figures. Primarily we are interested in the fortunes of Rowena and Ivanhoe, even when the identity of the latter is but suspected; at the same time our interest is aroused in other groups and in the forces which dominate them. Suppose we tabulate the more important characters of *Ivanhoe;* they seem to fall naturally into groups like these:—

1.	2.	3.
Ivanhoe and Rowena.	Cedric and Athelstane.	Prince John, Fitzurse, and De Bracy.
King Richard.	Robin Hood and Friar Tuck.	Front-de-Bœuf and Malvoisin.
Rebecca and Isaac.	Gurth and Wamba.	Bois-Guilbert and the Templars.

That is to say: (1) those who, because of their situation,

directly or indirectly appeal to our sympathy; the actual hero and heroine, who are contending with the traditional difficulties that beset the path of lovers in romance; the chivalrous king, vigorously conspired against by unnatural foes; and the Jew, an object of general persecution and contempt, associated with his daughter who, through her beauty of person and character, divides affection and honor with the heroine herself; (2) the Saxons, more or less independent, more or less aggrieved; (3) the Normans, conspirators politically and personally hostile to the hero.

Now if the highest artistic success is to be attained, the threads which carry the fortunes of these individual groups must be so closely interwoven that they shall visibly form one single strand. We must be made aware that these elements, hostile and congenial, conciliatory and discordant, compose a society which by their existence, and only by their existence, is complete; that the tendencies and inclinations here presented must inevitably act and react as described, and that though badly tangled at the start, the skein will prove to be properly in order at the end. Such is the problem of the plot; it is for us to discover, if we may, by what devices that result is accomplished.

Unity of the Plot.

In the first place, how is the structural unity, perhaps the most important as it is the most difficult essential in such a plot, to be obtained? Chiefly by showing that the interests of all the groups individually centre in the interests of one group, which naturally is the important group of the narrative, — that comprising the hero and the heroine of the romance. Now let the reader watch for the links in the narrative that bind these groups together, and prove for himself whether or not the bonds that unite them are natural and sufficiently strong to secure the unity required.

Scenes.

The development of the plot takes place in a series of *scenes*. It would be well to make a list of these scenes in order, together with the chapters occupied by each. Naturally the more elaborate, the more picturesque scenes are impressed most vividly on the mind; and

if one were asked to enumerate the successive scenes of *Ivanhoe*, the list would probably run like this : —

1. The Forest near Rotherwood.
2. The Hall and Mansion of Rotherwood.
3. The Lists at Ashby.
4. The Hermit's Hut of Copmanhurst.
5. The Castle of Torquilstone.
6. The Trysting Tree.
7. Templestowe.
8. The Castle of Coningsburgh.
9. The Lists of Templestowe.

Now while the scenes mentioned are indeed prominent ones, the list is by no means complete. Several of these may be subdivided. There is really a change of scene when, though still in the forest, Gurth and Wamba are joined by the Prior and his companions ; and this new scene is clearly marked by its separation in chapter ii. Similarly, a new scene is created by the entrance of Cedric's guests recorded in chapter iv., although the location of the scene is precisely that of the former chapter, namely, Cedric's hall. The same change occurs with Isaac's entrance in chapter v., and the reader will in each case note the close of the preceding chapter for the announcement of the new event. The chapter divisions, however, do not always correspond to the succession of scenes. In chapter vi., for example, we have, first, the scene between the Palmer and the cup-bearer ; second, that in the apartment of Rowena ; third, the brief interview with Anwold ; fourth, the morning call on Isaac ; fifth, the rousing of Gurth ; sixth, the journey toward Sheffield. A *scene*, therefore, is a section of the narrative which, through the presence of the characters introduced, the conversation recorded, or the action described, is in dramatic effect complete.

The various scenes should be classified. Some are of value as presenting portraits of the persons concerned, some contain the germ from which subsequent action is to spring, some are apparently designed for contrasts and relief, as the

quiet forest scene (chapter xxxii.), and others for spectacular effect. In some scenes the action sets rapidly forward; in others it is almost stationary. Occasionally the author is compelled to go back in his narrative in order to pick up some thread of the action or to explain a situation which might otherwise be obscure. Note the symmetrical arrangement of scenes running through chapters xxi.–xxxi. which narrate the siege of Torquilstone.

Incidents.

An important element in the scene is the *incident*, or event which supplies the motive for the action of the scene. In these two fields, the arrangement of scene and the invention of incident, the story-teller's power is severely tested. Just as the scene must contribute naturally and directly to the action of the plot, so must the incidents that enliven it occur spontaneously and at least cause no digression from the strict line of plot construction — an extravagance which the economy of novel-writing cannot permit. The incidents of any important scene may be tabulated and examined. With regard to the probability of incidents, it should be stated that more latitude is allowed the romancer than is granted to the realistic novelist. A romance frankly assumes that things shall be done in the large. An amount of hyperbole in deeds as well as in words is expected; the atmosphere is one of adventure and daring; the extraordinary and marvelous are in order; rare beauty and heroism are demanded; the superlative prevails. At the same time there is a limit set by good taste and experience, and if the story-teller oversteps that, he will fall into the ditch of the mock-heroic and the absurd. There are a number of incidents in *Ivanhoe* that should be tested in this regard; the student will have no difficulty in selecting them.

In the invention and combination of incidents all degrees of artistic skill are shown. Let us examine, with reference to this point, the incidents set forth in chapters i. and ii. We have, first, the two thralls of Cedric fraternizing in the forest, watching the swine. The attempt to collect the scattered herd with the poor assistance of Fangs serves to bring out several facts of importance relative to Norman rule,

including Wamba's discourse on the meats. The second incident is the approach of travelers, announced by the trampling of their horses. The third is the threat of coming storm. These incidents are all preparatory to the scene in the hall at Rotherwood; let the student trace to the end the chain of incidents thus begun. The manifest purpose of the author is to account for the assembly of characters who meet eventually in Cedric's mansion. What is served by these preliminary incidents? Would it not have been as well to raise the curtain on the scene presented in chapter iii., or is there a propriety and order in the arrangement as it stands? Let each one of these incidents be studied in turn. What is the degree of probability in each? Is the logical connection clear? What is the force of each in shaping subsequent action? Note particularly the usefulness of the storm, and consider how much of what occurs is directly attributable to its agency. Not only should these points be noted by the student, but he should feel their comparative value in stimulating interest and in heightening suspense. Sir Walter was not always so happy in his introductions as here, and it might be well to compare these opening chapters with those of his first novel, *Waverley*, to emphasize the point.

Climax.

The incidents should be so arranged as to permit no dropping of interest; if possible, each should be more striking than the one preceding. As the story proceeds these climaxes become an important matter. There is a fine example of dramatic effect in climax in chapter v. when the Palmer meets the imputations of the Templar with the words "Second to NONE!" Study this incident with considerable care; see how unexpected and how forceful it is; then note how interest is quickened by Rowena's championship of Ivanhoe, after which the company soon separates and the chapter ends. A similar study should be made of the climaxes in the scenes at Ashby and at Templestowe, both in their immediate connection and in their relation to the final climax of the novel — the reconciliation of Cedric and the marriage of Ivanhoe.

Finally, the *characters* demand our study. What touches

of true nature do we find — what marks of unreal portraiture, if any? Words and actions may be inconsistent with the nature and endowment of the character as conceived: do you then find the sincere expression of actual personality, or is the characterization obviously artificial and unreal? Always remembering the larger liberty of romance, what deeds, if any, seem incredible and likely to detract from the probability of the story? Perhaps the propensities for evil are exaggerated: can parallels of the more startling acts of cruelty be found in fact? Compare these portraitures with history and with similar attempts in other fiction. Study Shakespeare's *King John* and also his Shylock in *The Merchant of Venice*. Do you think that Scott's characters show traces of Shakespeare's influence? Note the author's skill in the treatment of Richard. Ivanhoe is the hero of the novel, and therefore should not be presented as inferior to the best, but neither should the king appear to less advantage than his knight. Do you think it more appropriate that the Jester should sound the blast which summons the outlaws (chapter xl.) than that Richard should? Is it not an artistic touch therefore that permits Wamba to steal the bugle from the king? What other incidents reveal the art of the novelist in this respect? Still more delicate is the relation between the two women, Rowena and Rebecca. What is your impression concerning Scott's treatment of these two characters in personality, appearance, and influence?

The Characters.

In the more mechanical handling of his characters it is important to note the author's practice in several particulars. How does he get them before us? Are any of the important figures in Ivanhoe brought directly on the scene without previous mention? Study the careful preparation for Rowena's first appearance and note how effective is the actual introduction. In what degree are the characters self-revealing? How far is description necessary? When descriptive passages of some length do occur, is there evidence of skill in planning and placing them? In some cases disguise is evident — there is some degree of mystery involved. In such instances how complete is the disguise so far as the reader is

concerned? Is it wise to attempt utterly to conceal identity in fiction? May it not add to the interest in most cases to indulge the reader in a growing suspicion of the truth? Note the stages in the identification of the Black Knight. How is the effect of climax heightened when the Knight reveals himself among the outlaws?

Another interesting line of study on the characters is to note the counter-play of influence. Chapter xxxiv. is good material for such examination. The working of character on character is well brought out in the scene between Prince John, De Bracy, and Fitzurse. Note also the ruling motives displayed by each person in the story, for example, in Bois-Guilbert, in Isaac, in Cedric, and in Athelstane. Now it is easy enough to depict a "ruling motive," but it is not so easy to blend and harmonize it with the infinite variety of tendencies and motives that enter into human nature and give to the individual a complete and consistent personality of his own. It is neither caricature nor allegory that the novelist creates, but living men and women. How far in this respect do you think our novelist has succeeded? In this connection it would be well to compile a "List of Characters in *Ivanhoe*," to consider the distinctness and individuality of portraiture. Suppose you number the characters in the next novel you happen to read and make comparisons in this regard with Scott. When in addition to the characters of this romance we take into our count those of equal merit presented in his other novels, we arrive, perhaps, at a fairer estimate of the real genius of this Wizard of the North than in any other way.

Such is the line of study suggested for the reader of *Ivanhoe*. A similar course may be followed with other novels, as the student's interest may direct. A novel really worth reading is worth studying. In no other way will its artistic value be felt.

Brief Bibliography.

The *Life of Scott* by his son-in-law, J. G. Lockhart, is the authoritative biography. *The Journal of Sir Walter Scott* covers the period of his later life. The General Preface to the edition of the Waverley Novels

(1829) is full of interesting autobiography concerning his youth. *Sir Walter Scott* in the *English Men of Letters Series*, by R. H. Hutton, is the best short biography. The *Life of Scott* in the *Great Writers Series*, by C. D. Yonge, contains an extended bibliography. *Recollections of Sir Walter Scott*, by R. P. Gillis, and *Domestic Manners and Private Life of Sir Walter Scott*, by James Hogg, are of lighter character. *Abbotsford*, by Washington Irving, is a pleasant sketch of the novelist in his home. *Scott* (in *Encyclopædia Britannica*), by William Minto, and *Scott* (in *Chambers's Encyclopædia*), by Andrew Lang, are authoritative and concise. *Robin Hood*, by Ritson, and *The Old English Ballads* in any standard collection, such as Percy's *Reliques*, or vol. v. of Child's *English and Scottish Ballads*, will furnish interesting material on the outlaws of Sherwood Forest. *The Waverley Dictionary*, by May Rogers, contains an alphabetical arrangement of all the characters in the Waverley Novels, with a descriptive analysis of each character.

III. THE REVOLUTIONARY POETS: BYRON, SHELLEY.

The Influence of the Time.

Born in the period of social upheaval which closed the century, passing in boyhood through those years of strife and turmoil which accompanied the Revolution, two great English poets, Byron and Shelley, appear at the beginning of the nineteenth century as the real representatives of that epoch in English verse. The older poets had early lost the glow of their first enthusiasm and had gradually settled into the conservatism of established institutions; but Byron and Shelley were thoroughly inflamed with the spirit of revolt, a spirit which lent ardor to their verse and not infrequently broke forth in the experiences of their strenuous, troubled lives.

George Gordon, Lord Byron, was born in London January 22, 1788. His ancestry was not auspicious.

John, his father, was a libertine, and went by the nickname of "Mad Jack." The poet's uncle, William, was known as "the wicked lord;" and his grandfather had committed murder. Byron's mother, Catherine Gordon, a native of the Highlands, and excessively proud of her descent from James I., was an impulsive, hysterical woman, whose influence over her young son was anything but helpful. Her property had been squandered by her husband, who had deserted her and was living in France when their child was born. During the poet's boyhood mother and son lived at Aberdeen, until in 1798 Byron came to his inheritance and took possession of the ancestral estate of Newstead Abbey in Nottinghamshire. In the following summer young Byron entered a school in London. His mother accompanied him, her presence proving disastrous to the happiness of both. In her moods of affection and anger she was equally unreasoning and extravagant. From petting she would fly into fits of passionate abuse. Byron was early conscious of his mother's weak and irresponsible character; once when a school fellow exclaimed impatiently, "Your mother 's a fool," the boy replied quietly and rather to his comrade's surprise, "I know it." The effects of such an ancestry and such influences upon the moral development of Byron could not have been insignificant. Lord Byron, 1788-1824.

The years 1801–5 were spent at the famous public school of Harrow, where the young lord came under the wholesome discipline of a wise and excellent master, whom he later described as "the best, the kindest (yet strict, too) friend I ever had." Byron was not a hard student, but he read eagerly, learned a little German, and more French; Italian he seems to have mastered. At Harrow and at Cam- Harrow and Cambridge.

bridge, whither he went in 1805, he was passionately fond of athletics, in spite of the clubfoot, in regard to which he was morbidly sensitive. His handsome, melancholy face, his aristocratic, haughty spirit, his reckless daring, his genius, and his dissipation had made Byron a conspicuous and not unattractive figure at the University when, in 1807, he published his first volume of verse, entitled *Hours of Idleness*. There was nothing of particular promise in these early poems faithfully cast in the mould of Pope's heroic couplets; nor were they of sufficient importance, perhaps, to justify the sharp criticism of the Edinburgh reviewers, who vigorously assailed the book on its appearance. The point of their criticism was fair enough. The young poet's affectation of misanthropy was especially disagreeable. What was to be thought of a boy who expressed himself cynically in lines like these: —

> "Weary of love, of life, devoured with spleen,
> I rest, a perfect Timon, not nineteen;"

or who offered, as an epitaph upon a favorite dog, this: —

> "To mark a friend's remains these stones arise.
> I never knew but one, and here he lies"?

English Bards.

In the spring of 1809 Byron took his seat in the House of Lords. It was a mere formality, necessary to the recognition of his hereditary privileges. Byron's real emergence into public life came with the appearance of his satirical poem, *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers*, which was published a few days after the formal assumption of his parliamentary rights. The poem was at first anonymous; then a second edition followed with the author's name. In his own words, the young poet woke to find himself famous. The attack upon Jeffrey and Brougham was generally enjoyed and especially relished by those who

had suffered from their often brutal criticism. Byron paid his respects to his contemporaries in this satire, ridiculing Scott, whose *Lay of the Last Minstrel* had appeared in 1805 and *Marmion* in 1808; Wordsworth he characterized as "an idiot" who

> "Both by precept and example shows
> That prose is verse and verse is only prose."

Travels.

In June of the same year (1809) Byron left England upon an extended tour which lasted about two years and fed the imagination of the poet with romance and adventure. Byron's travels extended as far as the Orient; the story of the journey is told in the long poem, *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, and some experiences furnished material for the later work, *Don Juan*. In 1811, at news of his mother's illness, he returned to England, but just too late to see her alive.

The Metrical Romances.

The first two cantos of Lord Byron's most important work, *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, appeared in 1812. In spite of the faults and affectations which mar all of his more prominent compositions, this poem ranks among the great productions of English verse; and its place was speedily recognized. There is wonderful virility in the poetry of Byron at his best, an energy and passion that are irresistible; his verse is fluent and melodious, his descriptive passages vivid and brilliant. The popular success of these cantos was repeated in the series of briefer romances which followed. Within three years, with astonishing rapidity, he published *The Giaour* (pronounced *Jour*), *The Bride of Abydos*, *The Corsair*, *Lara*, *The Siege of Corinth*, and *Parisina*. The extravagance of early romanticism, the romanticism of "Monk" Lewis and Mrs. Radcliffe, found an echo in these melodramatic tales. Against the dark background of the

poet's cynicism and melancholy was developed the plot of oriental intrigue and lurid adventure. There was little variation except the mere change of scene from harem to pirate's cave or outlaw's camp. The same dark-browed, gloomy hero appeared in all — and enthusiastic readers saw in that hero the personality of the poet, ascribing the adventures and intrigues of the poems to Byron himself. These romances were immensely popular; 14,000 copies of *The Corsair* sold in one day. The success of *The Giaour* determined Scott to abandon the field of metrical romance and led, indirectly, to the publication of *Waverley* in the following year. The relations between the two poets had become very friendly. Byron apologized to Scott for his attack in *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers*, and each paid unselfish tribute to the genius of the other.

Marriage.

In 1815 Byron married a Miss Milbanke. The union proved unhappy, and within a year his wife left him. All sorts of scandals were reported. The public papers attacked him. A general spirit of hostility developed against the poet, finally driving him out of England, and pursuing him wherever he went.

In Italy.

With Byron's departure in 1816 a distinct epoch begins in his career. The rest of his life was spent almost wholly in Italy. On his way through Switzerland he gathered much material for his poems, and at Geneva first met Shelley. He settled at Venice. Here he wrote the third and fourth cantos of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, including the brilliant passages upon Waterloo, Napoleon, and the Rhine. During his residence in Italy, Byron produced an important series of dramatic poems, of which *Manfred* (1817) and *Cain* (1821) are the best. Upon the long

satirical poem *Don Juan* the poet was occupied from 1819 to 1824. This last work aroused, not without justice, a storm of condemnation. "In *Don Juan*," says Byron, "I take a vicious and unprincipled character and lead him through those ranks of society whose accomplishments cover and cloak their vices, and paint the natural effects." But the poem is an expression of Byron's revolutionary sentiments, which were too radical for that age, or for this.

Nothing in Byron's life so well became him as the manner of his leaving it. His wonderful energy would not permit him to be a merely passive observer amid movements and efforts with which he so strongly sympathized. He had already allied himself to the Italian revolutionists and was a member of the Carbonari at the outbreak of the Greek Revolution in 1821. The fortunes of Greece in her struggle for independence against the Turks interested the poet profoundly. He determined to take a personal part in the revolution, and in July, 1823, set forth from Genoa, taking £4000 of his own money to contribute to the cause. He was received with enthusiasm by the Greeks and appointed to lead a force of Suliotes in an attack upon Lepanto; but delays and difficulties multiplied, his health became undermined, and while drilling his command in the malarial region about Mesolonghi, he was attacked by fever, from the effects of which he died April 19, 1824.

The Greek Revolution.

The poetry of Lord Byron is in striking contrast to that of Wordsworth. The calm and meditative tone of the older poet is the very antithesis of the ardent energy of the younger. The "primal sympathy" with nature and man, the wholesome optimistic philosophy of Wordsworth is met by the rebellious cynicism and obtrusive egotism of Byron. His poetry is always spirited but

Suggestions for Study.

almost never spiritual. At the same time Byron's vital vigor is most impressive; his verse is aflame with passion.

> "The cold in clime are cold in blood,
> Their love can scarce deserve the name;
> But mine was like the lava flood
> That boils in Ætna's breast of flame."[1]

His worst faults are his misanthropy, his skepticism, and his frequent lapses from the heights of pure and noble passion to the low levels of grossness and vice. At his best Byron was master of a power which found expression in passages of stately eloquence. He reëstablished virility in English verse and imparted a force and freedom of movement which enriched and enlivened it to a remarkable degree. Scott praised "the exquisite poetry . . . scattered through the cantos of *Don Juan*, amid verses which the author seems to have thrown from him with an effort as spontaneous as that of a tree resigning its leaves." "All styles appear dull and all souls sluggish beside his," says Taine. If Byron's verse aroused the hostile opposition of conservative critics, it aroused as fierce a partisanship among his revolutionary sympathizers. Lord Byron was the idol of thousands whose ideas were as radical as his. There grew to be a Byronic cult, and the influence of his poetry upon thought and style was felt throughout Europe for a generation.

For the direct study of Byron's poetry, the volume of *Selections* edited by F. I. Carpenter (Holt) is especially recommended. Particular attention is directed to the third canto of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, where excellent examples may be found of Byron's superb power in description. Notice how frequently the subjective element intrudes; study the tone and spirit of these suggestive comments. Compare stanzas 70–75 of this third canto with Wordsworth's utterances in *Tintern Abbey* and *The Intimations of Immortality*. What other illustrations of Byron's cynicism do you find elsewhere? Note carefully the diction of these poems; indicate passages which illustrate the spontaneity and freedom of the verse. Read the lyrics contained in

[1] *The Giaour.*

Carpenter's volume, especially *The Isles of Greece*, *Maid of Athens*, *She Walks in Beauty*, *The Destruction of Sennacherib*, and *On this Day I Complete my Thirty-Sixth Year*. The dramatic poem *Manfred* should be read entire. Try to recognize those elements in Byron's poetry which were *new* to English verse. Do you find anywhere indications of the influence of Pope, whose principles of art Byron theoretically approved?

Upon the life of this poet, read John Nichol's *Byron*, in the *English Men of Letters Series*, or the *Life*, by Roden Noel, in the *Great Writers Series*. For criticism, refer to Matthew Arnold's *Byron* in his *Essays in Criticism*, 2d ser., the study of Byron by J. A. Symonds in Ward's *English Poets*, John Morley's essay in his *Miscellanies*, and the essay on the poet in W. E. Henley's *Views and Reviews* (Scribners). There are well-known essays upon Byron by Scott, Macaulay, Jeffrey, and Hazlitt; sketches and criticism without limit may be found in the works of those who have written upon English literature.

Brief Bibliography.

Like Byron, Shelley came of aristocratic lineage. His father, Sir Timothy, was the eldest son of Bysshe Shelley of Goring Castle: one branch of the family traced its descent from Sir Philip Sidney; another, to which the poet belonged, was connected with the Sackvilles.[1] Percy Bysshe Shelley was born at Field Place, in Sussex. As a child, his imaginative faculty was remarkable. He peopled the neighborhood with the creations of his romantic fancy. A dragon was located in a near-by wood; his sisters were terrified by his youthful tales of a headless spectre that haunted the vicinity, and of a gigantic tortoise which inhabited Warnham Pond. His imagination was evidently of a finer type than that which spends itself in the creations of childish buga-

Percy Bysshe Shelley, 1792-1822.

[1] It was Thomas Sackville, Earl of Dorset, who was part author of *Gorboduc*, the first English tragedy. See page 116.

boos; in the *Hymn to Intellectual Beauty* he alludes to the experience of his boyhood thus: —

> "While yet a boy, I sought for ghosts, and sped
> Thro' many a listening chamber, cave and ruin,
> And starlight wood, with fearful steps pursuing
> Hopes of high talk with the departed dead."

School Days.

At twelve Shelley was sent to Eton. His experiences were similar to those of Cowper. Delicate and refined in his tastes, by disposition shy, almost a recluse, he represented a very different type of youth from that exhibited in young Lord Byron. The environment of the big public school, with its 500 pupils, its fagging system — especially severe to a boy of Shelley's sensitive temperament — and the numberless petty persecutions incident to these conditions, was one of oppression and torture to Shelley. He stood apart from the rest, almost a solitary. He was nicknamed "Mad Shelley." As he came from his studies he was often set upon by a mob of his school fellows, rushing upon their victim with shouts and jeers, snatching and scattering his books, and chasing him with yells through the streets. By no means deficient in physical courage, Shelley was capable of standing his ground on equal terms. We are told that his eyes would flash like a tiger's; his cheeks grow pale as death; his limbs quiver with passion. Sometimes he stood at bay, and once, when harassed beyond endurance at meal time, suddenly seized a fork and pinned the hand of his tormentor to the table.

Oxford.

At nineteen Shelley went to Oxford, where his career was unfortunately brief. He read eagerly the works of the French essayists and became more and more radical in his views. The oppression of custom and conventionality made him rebellious.

He was as sincere as he seemed to be unpractical and quixotic in his rash idealism. "Thoughts of great deeds" were stirring in his soul. Not yet twenty, his feverish spirit roused like a champion against what he conceived to be the tyranny of the world.[1] He published a little tract upon *The Necessity of Atheism* and was expelled from the University.

In August of that same year, 1811, Shelley married Harriet Westbrooke, a pretty, amiable girl of sixteen, the daughter of a retired innkeeper in London. With a scanty income, this youthful and not happily mated pair lived for three years a somewhat migratory life. During a short residence at Keswick, Shelley made the acquaintance of Southey, whose poetry he at that time greatly admired. In the spring of 1812 the young couple were in Ireland. The cause of Catholic emancipation enlisted the poet's sympathy. He issued an *Address to the Irish People* and spoke at a public meeting which was addressed by the agitator Daniel O'Connell. Failing to arouse much response by his efforts, he returned to England and began the serious work of literature.

Marriage.

Shelley's first long poem, *Queen Mab*, was composed at least a year before its publication in 1813. The queen of the fairies is represented as conveying the earth spirit, the sleeping Ianthe, to her realm in space, and disclosing a vision of the world, past, present, and to come. Tyranny, war, superstition, and bigotry are painted in crude but vigorous colors. The poet's early atheism is echoed in the utterance "There is no God!" but a note, subjoined by the author, declares that

Important Poems.

"This negation must be understood solely to affect a creative Deity. The hypothesis of a pervading spirit, coëternal with the universe, remains unshaken."

[1] Read stanzas iii.–v. from the Prelude to *The Revolt of Islam.*

Realizing the imperfections of his work, Shelley allowed this poem to be printed for private circulation only. In 1815, on the borders of Windsor Park, he composed his next important poem, *Alastor, or the Spirit of Solitude.* In this composition, which is romantic rather than disputative, the wonderful imagination of the poet gathers force; the emotion is more restrained. There is a touch of Wordsworth's calmer spirit in passages like this: —

> "I wait thy breath, Great Parent, that my strain
> May modulate with murmurs of the air,
> And motions of the forests and the sea,
> And voice of living beings, and woven hymns
> Of night and day, and the deep heart of man."

The same qualities are found in *The Revolt of Islam*, written at Marlow, and published in 1817. The hero of the poem, Laon, appears as a youth nourished in dreams of liberty and desirous to confer its benefits upon humanity. The heroine, Laone, is filled with the same enthusiasm. Together they struggle passionately for this conclusion, and although unsuccessful, they die unvanquished. The tone of the poem is entirely optimistic. "Love is celebrated everywhere as the sole law which should govern the moral world." [1]

Italy.

A formal separation between Shelley and his wife had taken place in 1814, and the poet had formed a new union with Mary Godwin, the daughter of William Godwin, an advocate of revolutionary ideas and a leader whose theories were shared by many young enthusiasts. After the tragic death of Harriet, by suicide in 1816, Shelley had made Miss Godwin his legal wife. In 1818 they left England — the poet never to return. Bitter opposition to his views, together with personal hostility and criticism of his private life,

[1] Preface to *The Revolt of Islam.*

made it impossible for him to remain longer in the kingdom. After living during brief intervals in various Italian cities, including Genoa, Milan, Venice, Florence, and Rome, the Shelleys settled permanently in Pisa, late in 1819. Some of the most beautiful of the lyrics were written at this time. The *Lines on the Euganean Hills*, the *Lines Written in Dejection*, the *Ode to the West Wind*, were products of this period. In November, 1819, he completed his masterpiece, the great world poem, *Prometheus Unbound*, and at once began upon his sombre but impressive drama, *The Cenci*. *The Witch of Atlas*, *The Sensitive Plant*, *The Skylark*, and *Epipsychidion* were written in 1820. A notable prose work, a *Defence of Poetry*, was composed in the following year. The death of Keats in 1821 inspired Shelley's *Adonais*, one of the great elegies in literature.[1] In these compositions we find a rapidly maturing power of the imagination and a lyrical quality unsurpassed by that of any English poet. The spirit of the poetry is fervid and intense, but it is held in restraint, and expresses itself with more wisdom and sounder judgment than in the period of *Queen Mab*. The poet had learned much in the school of life; he had, it seems to us, now but just begun to comprehend himself and the real relations of things when the end came; his career was broken off and his work left incomplete by his untimely death.

The Poet's Death.

In the spring of 1822 the Shelleys removed from Pisa to make their residence near Spezzia, upon the coast. Byron had already settled in Pisa, and Leigh Hunt, the poet, intimately associated with both Byron and Shelley in a scheme for the publication of a paper in the interests of reform, was invited from London to join his friends in Italy. When

[1] See page 196.

Hunt arrived in Pisa, Shelley hastened to meet him. Returning, he set sail from Leghorn, July 8, 1822, in his yacht, the Ariel, together with an English friend and neighbor, a Mr. Williams. A sudden squall struck the little craft half-way to Spezzia, and all on board were drowned.

Ten days later the bodies were washed ashore. They were at first buried in the sand; but on the eleventh of August, in the presence of Byron, Hunt, and a common friend, Trelawney,[1] Shelley's body was exhumed and burned upon a pyre. In accord with the ancient pagan rites, wine, oil, and salt were thrown upon the flame; a volume of Keats, found upon the person of the poet, was also cast upon the pyre. The heart of Shelley, strangely unconsumed, was taken from amid the ashes, which were gathered and afterward deposited by the grave of Keats in the English burying-ground at Rome.

Suggestions for Study.

In judging of Shelley's place among the poets, it will be natural to compare his work with that of Byron and Wordsworth. While in many points Shelley and Byron sympathized, it will be found that in personality and character they were extremely unlike. The spirit of revolt speaks in both; they are alike rebellious and defiant; but Shelley's motives are far nobler, his instincts and passions far purer than Byron's. There was no cynicism, no malignancy in Shelley's heart. Sympathetic, tender, self-forgetful, philanthropic, he was in many ways the antithesis of Byron. Adoring beauty in all its forms, he was never sensual; on the contrary his tastes were delicate

[1] This gentleman, Edward J. Trelawney, lived a most romantic life of adventurous enterprise. It was he who took the chief part in the burning of Shelley's body. The year following he accompanied Byron into Greece and remained among the revolutionists after that poet's death. He wrote a notable volume, *Recollections of the Last Days of Byron and Shelley*. Upon his death in England (1881) his own body was cremated and his ashes placed by the side of Shelley's at Rome.

and refined to a superlative degree. *The Hymn to Intellectual Beauty* is expressive of his passion, and should be studied for an interpretation of that ideal which filled his thought. The *tone of sadness* in Shelley's poetry is very striking: whence does it proceed — is its expression depressing or misanthropic — is it Byronic? Find in the beautiful poem *To a Skylark* stanzas expressive of this melancholy; look elsewhere for similar expressions.

Compared with Wordsworth we find that, like Byron, Shelley lacked the quiet calm of a philosophic mind; he did not possess the judicial quality, the impartiality, the balance of settled wisdom; impulsive, impetuous, he necessarily lacked the intuition, the faith of the elder poet. But Shelley far surpassed Wordsworth, and Byron too, in *imagination and ideality*. Shakespeare and Milton, possibly Spenser, are the only poets who have equaled him in this wonderful power. There seem no limits to his creative ability. In the *Prometheus Unbound* this power is at its highest. Yet it is the *lyrical faculty* which is always paramount in his verse. *To a Skylark* and *The Cloud*, *The Ode to the West Wind*, *The Sensitive Plant*, and *Adonais*, together with the remarkable "songs" in *Prometheus Unbound*, are familiar illustrations.

The *Prometheus Unbound* will call for serious study. It is one of the world's great poems, and, in spite of its abstruse and subtle allegory, is not beyond the appreciation of any intelligent student who has the literary taste. The drama has been edited for school use by Vida D. Scudder (Heath). The introduction and notes of this edition will be found helpful. Shelley's Preface to the poem should be read for its expression of his purpose and plan; incidentally, also, as an example of the poet's choice style in prose. How does the character of Prometheus fit the scheme of the poem? What features of the myth make this story especially appropriate for its purpose? In Shelley's construction of the drama what models are followed? How are the characters of Prometheus, Asia, Ione, and Panthea to be interpreted allegorically? What is served by the repetition of

the curse in the beginning of Act I? Why is such prominence given to the fact that Prometheus feels pity for his oppressor? What is the relation of this expression of pity to the subsequent release of the Titan? What is the real occasion of Jupiter's downfall? Note the dramatic power of the first act; indicate some passages of special force. How many of the characters are introduced as spirits, or voices? The lyric passages are particularly beautiful. The song of the Fourth Spirit, "On a poet's lips I slept" (Act I., line 738), is worthy of special attention. If the student becomes lost amid the multitude of complex and shadowy creations of the remaining acts, let him at least consider the effect in lyrical passages like the "Follow, follow" song (Act II., lines 166–206), the demichorus of spirits (scene ii.), the song of spirits (scene iii.), "My coursers are fed with the lightning" (Act II., lines 566–582), the "Life of life!" and Asia's song (Act II., lines 625–687). What a wealth of melodious verse is here! Richness of fancy and an extraordinary command of language are everywhere evident.

This great drama is the highest expression of the revolutionary spirit in our literature. Its strength is the strength of that movement; its defects are the result of the crude and incomplete reasonings of its philosophy. The spirit of the poem is that of love and hope. Freedom is the goal of the race; and although the poem describes but a partial triumph, it closes with the sunrise, — the dawn of the new day when Love springs

> "from its awful throne of patient power
> In the wise heart, . . .
> And folds over the world its healing wings."

Brief Bibliography. *The Poetical Works of Shelley* (8 vols.) edited by Harry Buxton Forman is the authoritative edition of the poet. *The Cambridge Shelley*, edited by G. E. Woodberry, contains the complete poetical works in one volume (Houghton, Mifflin and Company), as does the Globe Edition (Macmillan), edited by E. Dowden. The *Life of Shelley* (2 vols.) by Edward Dowden is the standard biography. J. A. Symonds is author of the *Shelley* in the

English Men of Letters Series. The *Life* in the *Great Writers Series* is by William Sharp. There are essays upon Shelley by Matthew Arnold in *Essays in Criticism*, by David Masson in *Wordsworth, Shelley, and Keats*, by J. Forster in *Great Teachers*, and by G. E. Woodberry in *Makers of Literature.*

John Keats, the young English poet of wonderful promise, whose pathetic death at the early age of twenty-five inspired Shelley to write *Adonais*, is usually mentioned in connection with that poet; but the resemblance is accidental, and even the relations of personal friendship between the two were slight. Their common bond was the passionate love of beauty in both. There was nothing of the revolutionist in Keats; while Shelley and Byron, out of sorts with the present, were looking with longing to the future, Keats was fascinated by visions of the past.

John Keats, 1795-1821.

> "Lo! I must tell a tale of chivalry;
> For large white plumes are dancing in mine eye." [1]

It was a volume of Spenser that discovered the young poet to himself at sixteen years of age. When Charles Cowden Clarke [2] introduced the surgeon's apprentice of Edmonton to the glowing pages of *The Faerie Queene*, a new poet of pure romance was born into the world of literature. The parentage of this poet was humble. His father was employed in a livery stable in London, had married his employer's daughter, and inherited the business. His son's education was gained in a private school at Enfield, kept by the Reverend John Clarke, whose son, already referred to, became the poet's intimate and very helpful friend.

His Inspiration.

[1] *Specimen of an Induction to a Poem.*

[2] Charles Cowden Clarke (1787–1877) enjoyed the friendship of many distinguished men. He was a noted Shakespearian student and the author of the entertaining *Recollections of Writers* (1878).

Keats was known at school as a rather lively, pugnacious boy, fond of sports and of reading. He studied Latin and translated the Æneid. Greek he never learned, but became well acquainted with the classic mythology. At fifteen he was taken out of school, both parents having died, and apprenticed for five years to a London surgeon, although he did not complete the term. He entered the hospitals and was ready to begin his practice when the allurements of literature proved too strong to be resisted, and he definitely determined to devote his life to poetry. Through the interest of Clarke, Keats began to read Chaucer, and also Chapman's *Translation of Homer*, an event which he recorded in his famous sonnet, *On First Looking into Chapman's Homer*, — one of the finest sonnets in the language. He became acquainted with Charles Lamb, Hazlitt, Leigh Hunt, Wordsworth, and, later, with Shelley. Hunt was his literary adviser and published some of Keats's poems in his paper *The Examiner*. Hunt's radical ideas and his hostility to the Government undoubtedly prejudiced popular feeling against the poet, and may account in part for the severity of the unjust criticism which greeted the poet's appearance.

In 1817 Keats published his first volume of verse.

The Poems. The following year brought forth *Endymion*, his longest poem, "the stretched metre of an antique song;" inscribed to the memory of Thomas Chatterton. The beauties of this ambitious work might have disarmed criticism of its manifest faults, especially in view of the statements in the very modest preface to the poem; but the critics in the great reviews assailed the author with exceptional bitterness. Lockhart, the son-in-law of Scott, in a trenchant article in *Blackwood's*, wrote: —

"It is a better and a wiser thing to be a starved apothecary than a starved poet, so back to the shop, Mr. John, back to plasters, pills and ointment-boxes."

To these abusive personalities Keats replied in manful fashion, declaring that his own criticism of his work had given him pain without comparison beyond what *Blackwood's* or the *Quarterly* could inflict; but the indignation of his friends was beyond bounds. They asserted that the poet's failing health was aggravated and death hastened by the virulence of these attacks, and this opinion prevailed for many years. The charge, however, was untrue; the poet was already suffering from the disease consumption, which ended fatally three years later.

In 1820 appeared the third volume of this poet's works; it included *Lamia*, *Isabella*, *Hyperion*, *The Eve of St. Agnes*, and the four exquisite odes, *To a Nightingale*, *On a Grecian Urn*, *To Psyche*, and *On Melancholy*. The genius of Keats had begun to mature.

> "O for ten years, that I may overwhelm
> Myself in Poesy! so I may do the deed
> That my own soul has to itself decreed," [1]

he had cried passionately two years before; and now his career was closing, as he thought, with the deed still left undone. The last year of his life was a bitter struggle with death. In September, 1820, he went to Rome, hoping to gain some benefit from the Italian climate. But on the twenty-third of February following, the end came; the body of Keats was placed in the English cemetery, and upon the stone erected to mark the spot was engraved the epitaph which the poet, in bitterness of spirit, had desired: —

"Here lies one whose name was writ in water."

[1] *Sleep and Poetry.*

The Burden of Keats.

The quest of Beauty was the passion of Keats.

> "I did wed
> Myself to things of light from infancy"

he exclaims in *Endymion*, which begins with that familiar line,

> "A thing of beauty is a joy forever."

His spirit is pagan in the expression of its ideal: —

> "Beauty is truth, truth beauty — that is all
> Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know."[1]

In this worship of beauty in the abstract he and Shelley were at one; and this is the single point of union between the two. The lavish luxuriance of Keats's earlier work had given place in the later poems to a more discreet and careful use of his resources; he had attained a marvelous perfection of form. Had he lived he would have accomplished great things in English poetry. But in the weakness and dejection of the last dark days, he was mistaken. His name was not writ in water. No English poet has a more tender hold upon the memory than John Keats. Scarcely any other has had so deep and continuous an influence upon the poetry of those coming after.[2]

Thomas Moore, 1779-1852. Leigh Hunt, 1784-1859.

Two minor poets, Moore and Hunt, whose names are frequently mentioned in connection with Byron and Shelley, were prominently identified with the revolutionary group. Tom Moore, oftenest remembered as the author of *Irish Melodies* (1807) and the oriental romance of *Lalla Rookh* (1817), was born in Dublin and educated at Trinity College. He became a law student in London, won the friendship of Byron, and was made the liter-

[1] *Ode on a Grecian Urn.*

[2] The volume of selected poems edited, with Introduction and Notes, by Arlo Bates (Ginn) is especially recommended.

ary executor of that poet. His *Life of Byron* was long the standard biography. What Burns did for Scotland, Moore tried to do for Ireland; but his songs are less natural than those of the Scotch ploughman, and his other poetry, polished and sweet though it is, is artificial in the main.

Leigh Hunt was born at Southgate, in Middlesex, and studied with Coleridge and Lamb at Christ's Hospital School. His career as a journalist began with the establishment in 1808 of a weekly paper, *The Examiner*, in which he published some articles reflecting upon the Prince Regent that led to his imprisonment for libel. A poem upon the subject of Francesca da Rimini, written during his imprisonment, had considerable influence upon both Shelley and Keats. His short poem *Abou Ben Adhem* is well known. His style was light and graceful; but his prose sketches and criticisms are of greater value than his verse.

IV. ROMANTICISM IN ENGLISH PROSE: LAMB, DE QUINCEY

The influence of the romantic movement is strongly felt in the work of two prose writers contemporary with the poets just described. They were not novelists. Although distinguished from the ordinary essay type by the nature of their subjects and the manner of treatment, their compositions are properly classified as essays. The essays of Charles Lamb, while Addisonian in a sense, are more truly Elizabethan in spirit, and there is not lacking a certain suggestiveness in them of the manner of Keats. A similar resemblance in spirit and method may be traced between the writings of De Quincey and the poetry of Coleridge. De Quincey and Lamb are both genuine romanticists. The imaginative element is conspicuous in the productions of each.

Charles Lamb, 1775-1834.

Charles Lamb, the most delightful of English essayists, whose memory is honored not only for the delicate grace and flavor of his style, but as well for his sweet and lovable nature, was born in London, within the confines of the Temple — that historic structure of huge proportions and rambling extent, once the chapter house of the Knights Templar, but for generations appropriated to the use of barristers for offices and lodgings. John Lamb was a lawyer's clerk, in exceedingly poor circumstances. There were three children who survived childhood: Charles; his sister Mary, ten years his senior; and an elder brother, John, who grew up selfish and ease-loving, apparently without concern in the fortunes and trials of the family. Charles describes his father[1] as "a man of an incorrigible and losing honesty."

Childhood.

Through the interest of a friend of John Lamb's employer, Charles was taken when six years old out of the dingy little school in Fetter Lane, where he obtained the rudiments of learning, and given a scholarship in the famous "blue-coat" school of Christ's Hospital, where he remained seven years, and where the life-long friendship with Coleridge, his fellow pupil, was firmly established. Lamb's childhood was darkened by the struggle with poverty, but his cheery, courageous temper was early in evidence. His imagination was particularly active; he declares that from his fourth to his seventh year he never laid his head on his pillow "without an assurance, which realized its own prophecy, of seeing some frightful spectre."[2] He was a good Latin scholar, and amused himself by turning nursery rhymes into that language.

[1] Under the name of "Lovel," in *The Old Benchers of the Inner Temple.*

[2] *Witches, and Other Night Fears.*

In the study of Greek he did not proceed very far, reaching the rank of "deputy-Grecian," beyond which he could not pass, as the higher grade presupposed an entrance into the ministry; and from this he was prevented by an unfortunate impediment in his speech which made him a stutterer all his life.

In 1789 Charles Lamb left school — fourteen years old — and at that youthful age took up the responsibilities of active life. His father's health was failing, and the shadow of a terrible malady hung over the household. The boy found employment in the South-Sea House, the office of a great London trading company; two years later he secured a clerkship with the East India Company, in whose employ he continued for thirty-three years. He found little leisure; but when Coleridge occasionally ran down from Cambridge for a brief visit to London, it was the pleasure of the two school comrades to meet at the "Salutation and Cat" to spend long evenings together in the discussion of literature and old times. Lamb's first literary efforts appeared in connection with his friend's. In 1796 Coleridge printed his first volume of poems, and there were included four sonnets signed "C. L."

An Office Clerk.

The winter of 1795–96 ushered in a year of tragic significance for the Lambs. Insanity was a family inheritance. John Lamb, the father, had gradually lost his faculties until now he had lapsed into the condition of a child. During the winter Charles himself succumbed to an attack of the disease and passed some weeks in confinement at a hospital for the insane. The mother was an invalid. The burden of the household necessarily fell upon Mary Lamb. In September, 1796, her own reason gave way, and in a fit of madness she took her mother's life. So long as the father lived Mary remained in confinement,

The Tragedy of the Household.

gradually recovering her reason under treatment. Such was the calamity which fell upon Charles and Mary Lamb, an affliction from the effects of which they were never entirely freed. Some knowledge of its details is necessary if we would appreciate the extraordinary fortitude and patient heroism which distinguished the lives of brother and sister.

Brother and Sister.

By and by, upon assuming certain responsibilities, Charles Lamb was permitted by the authorities to care for his sister in his home. She continued subject to occasional temporary derangement all her life; when threatening symptoms appeared she was placed in a retreat, returning after recovery to the home. A friend of the family relates how once he met Charles and Mary Lamb walking, hand in hand, across the fields to the old asylum, their faces bathed in tears. The attachment of this brother and sister was ideal; none other ever crept in to interrupt it. As long as he lived Charles cared for his sister's comfort with an almost religious devotion; and in her turn she devoted herself to him.

Mary Lamb shared the talents of Charles.

"Her education in youth was not much attended to. . . . She was tumbled early, by accident or design, into a spacious closet of good old English reading, without much selection or prohibition, and browsed at will upon that fair and wholesome pasturage." [1]

The Literary Life.

Lamb's literary career began unostentatiously with the publication, in 1797, of *Poems by Charles Lamb and Charles Lloyd;* fifteen of these, described by a contemporary reviewer as "plaintive," were by Lamb. In 1798 he published a prose tale of

[1] *Mackery End, in Hertfordshire*, in which Lamb describes his sister under the name of "Bridget Elia."

Rosamund Gray and Old Blind Margaret. His unsuccessful drama, *John Woodvil*, followed in 1799. Success was slow in coming. There were occasional contributions to the newspapers, six jokes a day to *The Post*, at sixpence; but prospects were not very encouraging.

"It has been sad and heavy times with us lately," writes Mary Lamb in 1805. "When I am pretty well his low spirits throw me back again; and when he begins to get a little cheerful, then I do the same kind office for him. You would laugh, or you would cry, perhaps both, to see us sit together, looking at each other with long and rueful faces, and saying 'How do you do?' and 'How do *you* do?' and then we fall a crying, and say we will be better on the morrow. He says we are like toothache and his friend gumboil, which though a kind of ease, is but an uneasy kind of ease, a comfort of rather an uncomfortable sort."

But the spirit of the home was by no means gloomy. Coleridge, with his brilliant conversation, was a frequent guest; Wordsworth and Southey were familiar visitors: and within the small circle of his intimate friends the gay spirits of Charles Lamb easily broke through the shyness and the melancholy that sometimes oppressed him.

The first real success came in 1807, with the publication of *Tales from Shakespeare*. In this work, which still remains a much used classic, the stories of the most important Shakespearian dramas are told with remarkable insight and charm of style. Mary Lamb had a part in the honors of this achievement, the comedies having been treated by her, while her brother worked upon the tragedies. A new interest was aroused in the literature of Elizabeth's time which had been long neglected, an interest which was further stimulated by

The Tales from Shakespeare.

the publication in the following year of *Specimens of English Dramatic Poets Contemporary with Shakespeare*. These works gave Lamb an established reputation in literary criticism. Two subsequent essays, on *The Tragedies of Shakespeare* and on *The Genius and Character of Hogarth*, added to his fame. It was not, however, until the *Essays of Elia*[1] began to appear in the newly established *London Magazine* that the real genius of Lamb was revealed.

The Essays of Elia.

In August, 1820, the essayist contributed his first paper to the *Magazine*, that upon *The South-Sea House*. One a month these papers continued to appear until the close of 1822, when the entire series was published under the title by which they are universally known. The subjects of these essays seem to have been chosen almost at haphazard: they range from *Oxford in the Vacation* to *The Praise of Chimney-Sweepers* and *A Dissertation upon Roast Pig;* from *Christ's Hospital Five-and-Thirty Years Ago* to *A Bachelor's Complaint of the Behavior of Married People*. There is much in these light-hearted, breezy observations upon the humors of life to remind one of Addison and Steele; but they have a distinction and a flavor entirely of their own. Lamb was enamored of the *old;* he declared that when a new book appeared he read an old one. He confesses "hanging over, for the thousandth time, some passage in old Burton, or one of his strange contemporaries."[2] The *Religio Medici*, the works of the older dramatists, were a source of never-failing delight. He was saturated with the very diction of the Elizabethan writers, their conceits, their turns of phrase; there is much to suggest

[1] The name "Elia" really belonged to a fellow clerk and was appropriated as a joke by Lamb, who signed his contributions by that name.

[2] *Mackery End, in Hertfordshire.*

them in the English of "Elia." The *Essays* are filled with the gentle humor of their author's sunny spirit. There is no irony, no cynicism in Lamb's criticism of life. He was asked one day if he did not hate a certain person. "Hate him?" he retorted; "how could I hate him? Don't I know him? I never could hate any one I knew." He was a timid, sensitive, nervous, stammering little man, at ease only among the few who were his intimate associates; yet he loved the crowded thoroughfares of the metropolis, and craved the presence and nearness of his fellows. He once wrote to Wordsworth that he often shed tears in the motley Strand, from fullness of joy at so much life.

In 1825 Lamb was given a generous pension by his employers, and released from the servitude of the desk. But the last years were not happy ones. Mary's malady was growing worse; Charles's health was failing. The experiment of a rural residence brought loneliness. Finally they settled in Edmonton. The *Last Essays of Elia* were published in 1833. The following year Charles died. Mary Lamb lived until 1847, dying at the age of eighty-two. She was buried by her brother's side, in the churchyard of Edmonton.

Last Years.

To suggest a "study" of Charles Lamb would almost spoil the pleasure which may be absorbed, intuitively, by a sympathetic reading of these delightful essays. It seems more appropriate to suggest merely what appears the more direct and natural route to the heart of Elia, by indicating certain essays to be read in order, leaving the student to use his own good sense and ready inclination for further self-direction. Take, then, first, those papers which deal with the localities associated with Elia's interests: *The Old Benchers of the Inner Temple*,

Suggestions.

Christ's Hospital Five-and-Thirty Years Ago, *Blakesmore in H——shire*, *The South-Sea House*, *Mackery End in Hertfordshire*. Some of the essays named contain delicate portraitures of character which introduce, under transparent disguises, the author's relatives and friends. In *My Relations* we have a sketch of the older brother John. Now turn at will among the remaining papers of either series; discover for yourself specimens of Lamb's delicate humor, like the episode of the Quakers at Andover in *Imperfect Sympathies*, the wealth of jocular allusion in *All Fools' Day*, the quaint and sunny philosophy contained in *Mrs. Battle's Opinions on Whist*, the quizzical confessions of his own defects in *The Old and the New Schoolmaster*, and in *A Chapter on Ears*, with revelations of a more serious sentiment in *Old China*, *Barbara S.*, and *The Old Margate Hoy*, or the pathetic confidences of *Dream Children; A Revery*, and the frank, self-portraiture of *The Superannuated Man*. The antiquated phrasings, the choice discrimination of terms, the rich vocabulary — these may all be noted without the exact and careful processes of formal study. Take the *Essays of Elia* and *read* the character of Charles Lamb.

Brief Bibliography.

The *Essays of Elia* are published in the *Camelot Series*. The *Tales from Shakespeare* are included in Numbers 64, 65, 66 of the *Riverside Literature Series* (Houghton, Mifflin and Company); Number 79 contains nine of the most noted *Essays*. *The Life, Letters, and Writings of Charles Lamb*, edited by Percy Fitzgerald, is a standard work. The *Poems, Plays, and Miscellaneous Essays* are edited by A. Ainger (Macmillan). The best *Life of Lamb* is that by Ainger, in the *English Men of Letters Series*. There are interesting essays upon Lamb by G. E. Woodberry, in *Makers of Literature*, by Walter Pater, in *Appreciations*, by Augustine Birrell, in *Obiter Dicta*, and by De Quincey, in his *Biographical Essays*.

Thomas De Quincey is one of the eccentric figures in English literature. Popularly he is known as the

English Opium-Eater and as the subject of numerous anecdotes which emphasize the oddities of his temperament and the unconventionality of his habits. That this man of distinguished genius was the victim — pitifully the victim — of opium is the lamentable fact; that he was morbidly shy and shunned intercourse with all except a few intimate, congenial friends; that he was comically indifferent to the fashion of his dress; that he was the most unpractical and childlike of men; that he was often betrayed, because of these peculiarities, into many ridiculous embarrassments, — of all this there can be no doubt; but these idiosyncrasies are, after all, of minor importance — the accidents, not the essentials in the life and personality of this remarkable man. The points that should attract our notice, the qualities that really give distinction to De Quincey, are the broad sweep of his knowledge, almost unlimited in its scope and singularly accurate in its details, a facility of phrasing and a word supply that transformed the mere power of discriminating expression into a fine art, and a style that, while it lapsed occasionally from the standard of its own excellence, was generally self-corrective and frequently forsook the levels of commonplace excellence for the highest reaches of impassioned prose. Nor is this all. His pages do not lack in humor — humor of the truest and most delicate type; and if De Quincey is at times impelled beyond the bounds of taste, even these excursions demonstrate his power, at least, in handling the grotesque. His sympathies, however, are always genuine, and often are profound.

Thomas De Quincey, 1785-1859.

Thomas De Quincey was born in Manchester August 15, 1785. His father was a well-to-do merchant of literary taste; but of him the children of the household scarcely knew: he was an invalid,

Boyhood.

a prey to consumption, and during their childhood made his residence mostly in the milder climate of Lisbon or the West Indies. Thomas was seven years old when his father was brought home to die, and the lad, though sensitively impressed by the event, felt little of the significance of relationship between them. Mrs. De Quincey was a somewhat stately lady, rather strict in discipline and rigid in her views.

De Quincey's child life was spent in the country; first at a pretty rustic dwelling known as "The Farm," and after 1792 at a larger country house near Manchester, built by his father, and given by his mother the pleasantly suggestive name of "Greenhay" — *hay* meaning *hedge*, or *hedgerow*. De Quincey was not a sturdy boy. Shy and dreamy, exquisitely sensitive to impressions of melancholy and mystery, he was endowed with an imagination abnormally active even for a child. It is customary to give prominence to De Quincey's pernicious habit of opium-eating, in attempting to explain the grotesque fancies and weird flights of his marvelous mind in later years; yet it is only fair to emphasize the fact that the later achievements of that strange creative faculty were clearly foreshadowed in youth. For example, the earliest incident in his life that he could afterward recall he describes as

> "a remarkable dream of terrific grandeur about a favorite nurse, which is interesting to myself for this reason — that it demonstrates my dreaming tendencies to have been constitutional, and not dependent upon laudanum." [1]

Again he tells us how, when six years old, upon the death of a favorite sister three years older, he stole unobserved upstairs to the death chamber; unlocking

[1] *Autobiographic Sketches*, ch. i.

the door and entering silently, he stood for a moment gazing through the open window toward the bright sunlight of a cloudless day, then turned to behold the angel face upon the pillow. Awed in the presence of death, the meaning of which he began vaguely to understand, he stood listening to a "solemn wind" that began to blow — "the saddest that ear ever heard." What followed should appear in De Quincey's own words: —

"A vault seemed to open in the zenith of the far blue sky, a shaft which ran up forever. I, in spirit, rose as if on billows that also ran up the shaft forever; and the billows seemed to pursue the throne of God; but *that* also ran on before us and fled away continually. The flight and the pursuit seemed to go on forever and ever. Frost gathering frost, some sarsar [1] wind of death, seemed to repel me; some mighty relation between God and death dimly struggled to evolve itself from the dreadful antagonism between them; shadowy meanings even yet continued to exercise and torment, in dreams, the deciphering oracle within me. I slept — for how long I cannot say: slowly I recovered my self-possession; and when I woke, found myself standing as before, close to my sister's bed."

School Days.

In 1796 the home at Greenhay was broken up. Mrs. De Quincey removed to Bath, and Thomas was placed in the grammar school of that town. Four years later he entered the grammar school at Manchester, his guardians expecting that a three years' course in this school would bring him a scholarship at Oxford. However, the new environment proved wholly uncongenial, and the sensitive boy who, in spite of his shyness and his slender frame, possessed grit in abundance, and who was through life more or less a law to himself, made up his mind to run away

[1] Derived from Sahara.

His flight was significant. Early on a July morning he slipped quietly off — in one pocket a copy of an English poet, a volume of Euripides in the other. His first move was toward Chester — the seventeen-year-old runaway deeming it proper that he should report at once to his mother, who was now living in that town. So he trudged overland forty miles and faced his astonished and indignant parent. At the suggestion of a kind-hearted uncle, just home from India, Thomas was let off easily; indeed, he was given an allowance of a guinea a week, with permission to go on a tramp through North Wales, a proposition which he hailed with delight. The next three months were spent in a rather pleasant ramble, although the weekly allowance was scarcely sufficient to supply all the comforts desired. The trip ended strangely. Some sudden fancy seizing him, the boy broke off all connection with his friends and went to London. Unknown, unprovided for, he buried himself in the vast life of the metropolis. He lived a precarious existence for several months, suffering from exposure, reduced to the verge of starvation, his whereabouts a mystery to his friends. The cloud of this experience hung darkly over his spirit, even in later manhood; perceptions of a true world of strife were vivid; impressions of these wretched months formed the material of his most sombre dreams.

Rescued at last, providentially, De Quincey spent the next period of his life, covering the years 1803–7, in residence at Oxford. His career as a student at the University is obscure. He was a member of Worcester College, was known as a quiet, studious man, and lived an isolated if not a solitary life. In 1807 he disappeared from Oxford, having taken the written tests for his degree, but failing to present himself for the necessary oral examination.

The year of his departure from Oxford brought to De Quincey a long-coveted pleasure, — acquaintance with two famous contemporaries whom he greatly admired, Coleridge and Wordsworth. Characteristic of De Quincey in many ways was his gift, anonymously made, of £300 to his hero, Coleridge. This was in 1807, when De Quincey was twenty-two, and was master of his inheritance. The acquaintance ripened into intimacy, and in 1809 the young man, himself gifted with talents which were to make him equally famous with these, took up his residence at Grasmere, in the Lake Country, occupying for many years the cottage which Wordsworth had given up on his removal to ampler quarters at Rydal Mount. Here he spent much of his time in the society of the men who were then grouped in distinguished neighborhood; besides Wordsworth and Coleridge, the poet Southey was accessible, and a frequent visitor was John Wilson, later widely known as the "Christopher North" of *Blackwood's Magazine*. Nor was De Quincey idle; his habits of study were confirmed; indeed, he was already a philosopher at twenty-four. These were years of hard reading and industrious thought, wherein he accumulated much of that metaphysical wisdom which was afterward to win admiring recognition. In 1816 De Quincey married Margaret Simpson, a farmer's daughter living near.

Literary Friendships.

De Quincey's experience with opium had begun while he was a student at the University, in 1804. It was first taken to obtain relief from neuralgia, and his use of the drug did not at once become habitual. During the period of residence at Grasmere, however, De Quincey became confirmed in the habit, and so thoroughly was he its victim that for a season his intellectual powers were well-nigh para-

The Opium-Eater.

lyzed; his mind sank under such a cloud of depression and gloom that his condition was pitiful in the extreme. Just before his marriage, in 1816, De Quincey, by a vigorous effort, partially regained his self-control and succeeded in materially reducing his daily allowance of the drug; but in the following year he fell more deeply than ever under its baneful power, until in 1818–19 his consumption of opium was something almost incredible. Thus he became truly enough the great English Opium-Eater, whose *Confessions* were later to fill a unique place in English literature. It was finally the absolute need of bettering his financial condition that compelled De Quincey to shake off the shackles of his vice; this he practically accomplished, although perhaps he was never entirely free from the habit. The event is coincident with the beginning of his career as a public writer. In 1820 he became a man of letters.

As a professional writer it is to be noted that De Quincey was throughout a contributor to the periodicals. With one or two exceptions all his works found their way to the public through the pages of the magazines, and he was associated as contributor with most of those that were prominent in his time. From 1821 to 1825 we find him residing for the most part in London, and here his public career began. It was De Quincey's most distinctive work which first appeared. The *London Magazine*, in its issue for September, 1821, contained the first paper of the *Confessions of an English Opium-Eater*. The novelty of the subject was sufficient to obtain for the new writer an interested hearing, and there was much discussion as to whether his apparent frankness was genuine or assumed. All united in applause of the masterly style which distinguished the essay, also of the profundity and value

of the interesting material it contained. A second part was included in the magazine for October. Other articles by the Opium-Eater followed, in which the wide scholarship of the author was abundantly shown, although the topics were of less general interest.

The Magazine Articles.

In 1826 De Quincey became an occasional contributor to *Blackwood's Magazine*, and this connection drew him to Edinburgh, where he remained, either in the city itself or in its vicinity, for the rest of his life. The grotesquely humorous *Essay on Murder Considered as One of the Fine Arts* appeared in *Blackwood's* in 1827. In 1832 he published a series of articles on Roman history, entitled *The Cæsars*. It was in July, 1837, that the *Revolt of the Tartars* appeared; in 1840 his critical paper upon *The Essenes*. Meanwhile De Quincey had begun contributions to *Tait's Magazine*, another Edinburgh publication, and it was in that periodical that the *Sketches of Life and Manners from the Autobiography of an English Opium-Eater* began to appear in 1834, running on through several years. These sketches include the chapters on Wordsworth, Coleridge, Lamb, and Southey, as well as those *Autobiographic Sketches* which form such a charming and illuminating portion of his complete works.

The family life was sadly broken in 1837 by the death of De Quincey's wife. He who was now left as guardian of the little household of six children was himself so helpless in all practical matters that it seemed as though he were in their childish care rather than protector of them. Scores of anecdotes are related of his odd and unpractical behavior. One of his curious habits had been the multiplication of lodgings; as books and manuscripts accumulated about him, so that there remained room for no more, he would turn the key upon

his possessions and migrate elsewhere, to repeat the performance later on. It is known that as many as four separate rents were at one and the same time being paid by this eccentric man of genius, rather than allow the disturbance or contraction of his domain.

The literary labors were continuous. In 1845 the beautiful *Suspiria de Profundis* (Sighs from the Depths) appeared in *Blackwood's; The English Mail Coach* and *The Vision of Sudden Death* in 1849. Among other papers contributed to *Tait's Magazine*, the *Joan of Arc* appeared in 1847. During the last ten years of his life De Quincey was occupied chiefly in preparing for the publishers a complete edition of his works. Ticknor & Fields of Boston, the most distinguished of our American publishing firms, had put forth, 1851–55, the first edition of De Quincey's collected writings, in twenty volumes. The first British edition was undertaken by Mr. James Hogg of Edinburgh, in 1853, with the coöperation of the author, and under his direction; the final volume of this edition was not issued until the year following De Quincey's death.

In the autumn of 1859 the frail physique of the now famous Opium-Eater grew gradually feeble, although suffering from no definite disease. It became evident that his life was drawing to its end. On December 8, his two daughters standing by his side, he fell into a doze. His mind had been wandering amid the scenes of his childhood, and his last utterance was the cry, "Sister, sister, sister!" as if in recognition of one awaiting him, one who had been often in his dreams, the beloved Elizabeth, whose death had made so profound and lasting an impression on his imagination as a child.

De Quincey is an author to be studied. Of the "one hundred and fifty magazine articles" which comprise his

works, there are many that will not claim the general interest; yet his writings as a whole will be recognized by students of rhetoric always, as containing excellences which place their author among the English classics. Two leading characteristics should become obvious to the student who reads the more important and more attractive of these essays: the great imaginative power of the author, and the very evident romanticism which pervades these works.

Suggestions for Study.

A comparison between De Quincey and Lamb both in choice of themes and method of treatment will show many contrasts as well as some resemblances. In style they are wholly different: which of the two attracts you the more? It will be interesting to read De Quincey's account of *A Meeting with Lamb:* what serious defects do you note in the composition of this article?

Particularly worthy of reading are the *Autobiographic Sketches*, *The Confessions of an English Opium-Eater*, *The English Mail Coach*, and *The Vision of Sudden Death*, *Joan of Arc*, the *Suspiria de Profundis*, and *Murder Considered as One of the Fine Arts*. An excellent volume of *Selections from De Quincey* has been edited, with an elaborate introduction and notes, by M. H. Turk, in *The Athenæum Press Series* (Ginn); this volume is recommended for the special study of the essayist.

The authoritative edition of De Quincey's *Works* is that edited by David Masson and published in fourteen volumes by Adam and Charles Black (Edinburgh). For American students the Riverside Edition, in twelve volumes (Houghton, Mifflin and Company), will be found convenient. The most satisfactory *Life of De Quincey* is the one by Masson in the *English Men of Letters Series*. Of a more anecdotal type are the *Life of De Quincey* by H. A. Page, whose real name is Alexander H. Japp (2 vols., New York, 1877), and *De Quincey Memorials* (New York, 1891), by the same author. Very interesting is the brief volume, *Recollections of Thomas De Quincey*, by John R. Findlay (Edinburgh, 1886), who also contributes the paper on *De*

Brief Bibliography.

Quincey to the *Encyclopædia Britannica*. *De Quincey and his Friends*, by James Hogg (London, 1895), is another volume of recollections, souvenirs, and anecdotes which help to make real their subject's personality. Besides the editor, other writers contribute to this volume: Richard Woodhouse, John R. Findlay, and John Hill Burton, who has given under the name "Papaverius" a picturesque description of the Opium-Eater. The student should always remember that De Quincey's own chapters in the *Autobiographic Sketches*, and the *Confessions of an English Opium-Eater*, which are among the most charming and important of his writings, are also the most authoritative and most valuable sources of our information concerning him. In reading about De Quincey do not fail to read De Quincey himself.

The best criticism of the Opium-Eater's work is found in William Minto's *Manual of English Prose Literature* (Ginn and Company). A shorter essay is contained in Saintsbury's *History of Nineteenth Century Literature*. A very valuable list of all De Quincey's writings, in chronological order, is given by Fred N. Scott, in his edition of De Quincey's essays on *Style*, *Rhetoric*, and *Language* (Allyn & Bacon). Numerous magazine articles may be found by referring to *Poole's Index*.

William Hazlitt, 1778-1830.
Francis Jeffrey, 1778-1850.
John Wilson, 1785-1854.
John Gibson Lockhart, 1794-1854.

Among the prose writers of this generation were a group of men who won distinction as essayists in the special field of literary criticism. Hazlitt introduced the romantic style into this form of literature, infusing the spirit of sentiment, even of passion, into the expression of his critical judgments. His estimates of men are colored by his own personal enthusiasm for their work; he writes brilliantly, at times with eloquence. Among his most important essays are those on *English Poets* (1818), the *English Comic Writers* (1819), *Dramatic Literature of the Age of Elizabeth* (1821), and the *Life of*

Napoleon (1828–30). Francis Jeffrey, a distinguished Scotch advocate, was one of the chief originators of the *Edinburgh Review*, and remained one of its principal contributors for nearly forty years. With the autocratic and not infallible judgments of that famous quarterly, Jeffrey's literary career is closely identified. His style was forcible rather than eloquent; in ridicule and satire he was inimitable. Intellectually keen and eminently practical, he lacked the ability to understand the new poetry of Wordsworth and his fellows or to appreciate the genius of Byron or Keats. John G. Lockhart, the son-in-law of Walter Scott and author of the remarkable *Life of Scott* (1838), stands with Jeffrey among the robust reviewers in the first half of the century. In 1826 he became editor of the *Quarterly Review* and took up his residence in London. Like Jeffrey he wielded a trenchant pen, expressing his critical opinions at times in a manner most exasperating to the victim. He wrote a *Life of Burns* (1827) and a *Life of Napoleon* (1829). He shared the prejudices of the Scotch critics against the Lake poets, and described Tennyson's first volume as "drivel and more dismal drivel, and even more dismal drivel." John Wilson, better known by his pen-name of "Christopher North," was a picturesque genius of massive frame and athletic tastes, whose literary activities were connected with a third great review, *Blackwood's Magazine*.[1] He occupied the chair of Moral Philosophy in the University of Edinburgh; but his career commenced when he began contributing to *Blackwood's* in 1825. His *Noctes Ambrosianæ*, delightful reminiscences of his literary associates, is his best-known work. His style was more attractive than

[1] *Blackwood's* was established in 1817, the *Edinburgh Review* in 1802, the *Quarterly* in 1809.

Jeffrey's, and his critical judgment more impartial and discreet.

Walter Savage Landor, 1775-1864.

Filling a singular place in the literary life of this epoch stands the peculiar figure of Landor. Expelled from Rugby for insubordination, and disciplined at Oxford for his ungovernable self-assertiveness, he went his way through life disturbing and disturbed. He was infected, like Byron, with the revolutionary fever; and in 1808 he raised a band of volunteers to assist the Spaniards in their struggle with Napoleon. His entrance into literature came with the publication of the wildly extravagant romantic poem, *Gebir*, in 1798, the year of the *Lyrical Ballads*. Of several dramas written during the next few years, *Count Julian* was the most notable, receiving high praise from De Quincey. The works by which Landor's name is best known, however, the *Imaginary Conversations*, were written for the most part between 1821 and 1835, during the author's residence in Italy, under classic rather than romantic influences. Unique in their conception, these *Conversations* present the portraitures in dialogue of well-known historical characters — in the main faithfully suggesting the traits for which they were noted in life. Diogenes discourses with Plato, Marcellus with Hannibal; Henry VIII. visits Anne Boleyn in the Tower; Queen Elizabeth discusses with Cecil the claims of Spenser the poet. Epictetus and Seneca, Peter the Great, Louis XIV., Boccaccio and Petrarca, William Wallace, Bacon, Cromwell, Rousseau, and Epicurus — these are some of the diverse types of various races and times, whose portraits Landor thus delineates. A classic dignity and coldness characterize these essays, very different from the prodigal warmth and color of *Gebir*. In his old age Landor continued to produce.

"Do you think the grand old Pagan wrote that piece just now?" asks Carlyle of a *Conversation* published when Landor was over eighty. "The sound of it is like the ring of Roman swords on the helmets of barbarians! The unsubduable old Roman." [1]

He was honored by many distinguished representatives of the new era; John Forster, Dickens, and Browning were among his friends.

V. THE GREAT ESSAYISTS: MACAULAY, CARLYLE, RUSKIN.

The last great epoch in the history of English literature began in the second quarter of the century just completed. In the popular life of the nation, as well as in its literary life, the Victorian age was an era of wonderful development and achievement. Materially, the progress of invention and expansion has been marvelous. It was not until 1829 that the steam locomotive was placed in actual service upon an English railway; it was in the late thirties that the first steamships crossed the Atlantic, and that the electric telegraph came into practical use. Scientific discovery has within this period opened a new world of human knowledge. The spirit of democracy has asserted itself in the political and social organization of the state. In 1832 the English Reform Bill was passed, virtually making the people the governing power of the kingdom. The growth of popular education has been remarkable, and the literary activities of the age have kept pace with the material and intellectual progress of the people. **The Victorian Age.**

The characteristics of Victorian literature are best seen in the work of such representative prose writers

[1] See the excellent introduction, by Havelock Ellis, to *Imaginary Conversations* in the *Camelot Series*.

as Carlyle, Ruskin, Arnold, and Dickens, such poets as Tennyson, Browning, and Morris, preëminently teachers of their generation; they reveal their nearness to the public life and thought of the age, their purpose to assist, to correct, and to guide that life in matters of practical concern and in the perception of beauty and truth.

In reviewing the literary history of this period we shall consider in order, first, the work of the essayists; second, that of the novelists; and lastly, the work of the poets — in their respective groups.

Thomas Babington Macaulay, 1800-59.

First among the great writers of the new era to attract public attention was Thomas Babington Macaulay. Brilliantly successful as an historian and essayist, sensible, hard-headed, optimistic, full of faith in the institutions of his country, and participating actively in the administration of her interests, Macaulay was throughout the second quarter of the century a conspicuous figure in the political life of England, as he was her foremost representative in literature.

Parentage and Youth.

Macaulay was born at Rothley Temple in Leicestershire. His father, Zachary Macaulay, a man of unusual force of character, was connected for many years with the Sierra Leone Company, had been placed in charge of the colony at Freetown on the African coast, and devoted his energies to the movement for abolishing the slave trade. His associates were a band of philanthropists whose leader was Wilberforce. Mrs. Macaulay was of Quaker parentage, had been a pupil of the noted Hannah More, and maintained an intimate friendship with that interesting woman. Throughout his youth Macaulay lived in an atmosphere of serious purpose, surrounded by the influences of noble, unselfish lives. Both parents ex-

hibited rare judgment in the domestic training of their talented son.

Macaulay's childhood was quiet and happy. He was an incessant reader from the time that he was three years old; his favorite attitude was to lie stretched on the rug before the fire, with his book on the floor, and a piece of bread and butter in his hand. He was famous, while a boy, for his extraordinary memory and his ready absorption of books. He knew Scott's *Lay of the Last Minstrel* by heart before he was eight years old, and was inspired by its vigorous spirit to the composition of several epics, including a few swinging cantos upon the theme of King Olaf of Norway. Through life he retained this ability to absorb, almost at a glance, the contents of a page; and what he thus read he never forgot. He declared that if the *Paradise Lost* and the *Pilgrim's Progress* were destroyed, he would undertake to replace both from memory. Amusing stories are told of his numerous literary activities and of his unusual command of language while a mere child; of his sitting perched on the table, while the housemaid cleaned the silver, expounding to her out of a volume as big as himself; of his compendium of universal history, written at seven, of his hymns, his odes, and his ballads — really extraordinary productions for a lad of his years.[1]

In his nineteenth year Macaulay entered Trinity College, Cambridge. He won special honors in the classics and in oratory, and received a fellowship in 1824. While a student he began writing for the reviews, and in 1824 made his first public address, in an abolitionist meeting. In 1825 appeared his first contribution to *The Edinburgh Review*, his

At Cambridge.

[1] For the fuller account of Macaulay's boyhood, read Trevelyan's *Life and Letters of Lord Macaulay*, ch. i.

famous essay on *Milton*. Like Byron, Macaulay found himself famous in a day. Compliments poured in from every side — best of all the word of the formidable Jeffrey, editor of the *Review*: "The more I think, the less I can conceive where you picked up that style." It was not that a new literary method had been applied in the writing of reviews, but that a new master of English had appeared, whose style was as distinct from that of all other essayists as it was brilliant and lofty.

In Public Life.

Macaulay was called to the bar in 1826; but he never became prominent as a lawyer. His public service was rendered through literature. He entered Parliament in 1830, and delivered his maiden speech on the bill removing the Jewish disabilities. When he spoke upon the Reform Bill in March, 1831, the speaker declared that he had never seen the house in such a state of excitement. Three years later Macaulay was made president of a new law commission for India and a member of the Supreme Council of Calcutta. In the execution of the duties connected with this appointment, he remained two and a half years in India, returning in 1838. The results of his work were the *Indian Penal Code* and the *Code of Criminal Procedure*. In 1859 and 1869 these codes passed into law. Amid the exactions of his work in India, Macaulay yet found time for a vast amount of substantial reading, including almost the complete body of Greek and Roman literature. He also prepared and wrote the essay on *Bacon*. In 1839 he was once more in Parliament, was made Secretary of War, and a member of the Privy Council. In party politics Macaulay was a Whig, a strong partisan, and visibly interested in all questions of public reform. As an orator he was a fluent and rapid speaker; it was

the matter of his speech, his vivid language, his vehement directness of manner, rather than the graces of eloquent utterance, that gave him power with an audience. His public addresses were carefully prepared essays; but it is equally true that as an essayist he wrote in the style of the orator.

Between the publication of the essay on *Milton* in 1825, and that on *Bacon* in 1837, Macaulay had found time to prepare no less than fifteen notable articles for the *Edinburgh Review*, of which those upon *Machiavelli*, *Dryden*, *Byron*, and *Johnson* are, perhaps, most important. In 1840 appeared the essay on *Clive;* in 1841 that upon *Warren Hastings* — two of his most picturesque and eloquent productions. In these essays he made use of the rich material gathered during his residence in India. The *Lays of Ancient Rome* were published in 1842. Stirring and vivid portrayals of ancient Roman virtue, — the *virtue* that embodied the idea of courage and expressed itself in acts of patriotic devotion, — these *Lays* in the vigorous ballad measure form no insignificant contribution to English verse. They are in some degree typical of their author's spirit and character. The essays upon *Frederick the Great*, *Madame D'Arblay*, *Addison*, and *Pitt* were written between 1842 and 1844.

Literary Labors.

It is, however, the *History of England* which represents, in its greatest achievement, the genius of Macaulay. As early as 1841, Macaulay had written to his friend Napier: —

The History of England.

"I have at last begun my historical labors — I can hardly say with how much interest and delight. I really do not think there is in our literature so great a void as that which I am trying to supply. English history from 1688 to the French Revolution is, even to educated people, almost a *terra incognita*. . . . The materials for an amusing narra-

tive are immense. I shall not be satisfied unless I produce something which shall, for a few days, supersede the last fashionable novel on the tables of young ladies."

In the intervals between other labors the historian worked for ten years, until in 1849 the first two volumes appeared. The success of Macaulay's *England* was unprecedented. The first edition was sold in ten days; the second, as soon as printed. In America six different editions were issued, and the sales immediately after publication were estimated at 60,000 copies.[1] In 1855 volumes iii. and iv. were ready. The work was translated into all the civilized languages, and the success of the earlier volumes was reduplicated. In the autumn of 1856 part iii. of the *History* was begun; but Macaulay did not live to complete this task. He carried the narrative down to the year 1700, and this portion of the work was subsequently edited by his niece, Lady Trevelyan, as volume v.

Macaulay's *History* is the most picturesque history of England ever written. Its author possessed in rare degree the "historical imagination," which enabled him to see, and then vividly describe, the scenes and events of his narrative. His wonderful command of language, his powers of description and narration, enabled him to invest details with all the attractiveness of romance. For the interpretation of history Macaulay was unsuited; he believed heartily in the upward progress of society, but he made no profound study of historical movements as related to cause and effect. It was the panorama of history rather than its philosophy that he was qualified to present.

Many distinguished honors were bestowed upon the historian, both at home and abroad. One of the most highly prized had been received in his election as Lord

[1] See Trevelyan's *Life*, vol. ii. ch. 11.

Rector of Glasgow University, in 1849. In 1857 he was raised to the peerage by the queen, assuming the title Baron of Rothley. Failing health forbade his active participation in public affairs, but he kept busily employed at his *History* until the end. His death occurred as he sat in his library at Holly Lodge, Kensington. He was buried near Johnson and Addison, in the Poets' Corner of Westminster Abbey. **Last Years.**

The working period of Macaulay's life followed that of the revolutionary group; although contemporary with De Quincey and Wordsworth, there was nothing of the romanticist in his temperament or his method. Not gifted with fancy or sentiment, he could not appreciate the beauty or the imaginative power of their work. He moved on the common level of life, was proud of the material advance of the nation, and sought to promote its material interests. He was emphatically an optimist, and saw no lesson more impressive than that of progress in the record he had traced.

Suggestions for Study.

The essays on *Johnson*, *Goldsmith*, *Milton*, and *Addison*, edited by W. P. Trent, are included in Numbers 102, 103, 104 of the *Riverside Literature Series*, and may very well be selected for special study. Either the essay on *Clive*, or that on *Warren Hastings*, should be added to this group. The essay on *History* should also be read, to discover Macaulay's ideas upon historical writing. In the reading of these various essays appropriate comparisons between Macaulay and the earlier essayists will suggest themselves. The student should investigate the occasion for the publication of these essays and the significance of the term *review*. For the analysis of Macaulay's style, the section upon the essayist in Minto's *English Prose Literature* (Ginn) is almost indispensable; but even a superficial study will develop Macaulay's great facility in epigram, his frequent resort to antithesis, and his love for the balanced

structure in sentence construction. Numerous examples of these elements may easily be found. The rapid, vivacious movement of his composition cannot be overlooked.

The Life and Letters of Lord Macaulay by his nephew, G. O. Trevelyan, is the standard biography; it is reviewed by Gladstone in the *Quarterly Review* (1876). *Macaulay* in the *English Men of Letters Series* is by J. C. Morrison. The section upon *Macaulay* in Minto's *English Prose Writers* is the best general discussion of his distinctive style as a writer.

Thomas Carlyle, 1795-1881.

Unconventional, rugged, and stern, inspired with a robust idealism and a passionate zeal for righteousness, Thomas Carlyle appears among the essayists of the Victorian age like a later Langland, flinging himself forth in fierce epics of prose. He was, like Burns, born of plain Scotch peasant stock. His father, James Carlyle, a sturdy stone-mason in the homely little town of Ecclefechan, Dumfriesshire, was a man of pronounced individuality, strong-willed, speaking his mind bluntly and forcibly, and commanding the wholesome respect of his neighbors.

"I have a sacred pride for my peasant father," wrote Thomas Carlyle just after his father's death, "and would not exchange him, even now, for any king known to me. Gold and the guinea stamp — the Man and the Clothes of the Man!"

His mother was a gentle, affectionate woman, whose only fault, in the words of her son, was "her being too mild and peaceful for the planet she lived in."

Education.

Carlyle was intended by his parents for the Church; so he, the eldest of nine sons, was taught the rudiments of Latin by the minister, and, after a brief course in the high school at Annan, was sent to the University at Edinburgh — not quite six-

teen years old. He was a hard student, especially in the classics. For mathematics he showed special aptitude, and afterward taught that science in the high schools of Annan and Kirkcaldy. He was, moreover, at one time a candidate for the professorship of astronomy in Glasgow University. Carlyle's rapidly developing genius was recognized by his intimate associates, and he soon became the oracle of a little band of students, ambitious and poor — like himself.

Years of Struggle.

The years following his graduation were gloomy ones for Carlyle. His health was wretched; dyspepsia, "gnawing like a rat at his stomach," had already begun to torment him. He had fallen into a great bitterness of doubt — doubt concerning the existence of a God, doubt in respect to human character — worst doubt of all, the doubt of himself. His plans for the ministry were long since abandoned. He tried school teaching, and disliked it heartily. At last, with the necessity of labor upon him, he settled, in 1818, at Edinburgh, determined to follow literature, and began to live by his pen. Such hack-work as he could get he did; read French, Spanish, and German, especially the last, and in 1823 began his *Life of Schiller* in the *London Magazine* and published a translation of Goethe's great romance *Wilhelm Meister*. With Coleridge and De Quincey, Carlyle shares the honor of introducing English readers to the rich store of German literature. Finally the Edinburgh student conquered his skepticism and emerged into an atmosphere of clear and positive belief.

Craigenputtoch.

In 1826 Carlyle had married Jane Welsh, a lively, talented woman, who had a genuine taste for literature and a great admiration for her husband's genius. Two years later they settled upon a small estate belonging to Mrs. Carlyle at Craigen-

puttoch; and there, for six years, they lived a rather isolated life.

Sartor Resartus.

The necessity for utterance was upon Carlyle, as well as the necessity of a livelihood. He must speak forth the thoughts that were burning within him; but he must speak his thought in his own peculiar way. Editors refused to admit his articles to their pages because of their singular, apparently uncouth style; but Carlyle was not to be moved; he should be read as he wrote, or not at all. Thus it was not until 1833 that his first great work, the *Sartor Resartus*, after having been rejected by several editors, at last found a place in *Fraser's Magazine*. But once published this singular essay began to attract attention.

The *Sartor Resartus* (The Tailor Repatched) is a remarkable philosophy of clothes — clothes being regarded as the vestitures, or symbols, of what they cover. The sham and hypocrisy of life arouse the scornful laughter of the philosopher, who through a method unique in literature propounds his ideas of duty and preaches his doctrine of faith. It is the story of Carlyle's own personal struggle with his doubts that he embodies in this extraordinary work; his own philosophy of life which he here flashes forth in brief and disconnected gleams of light amid the obscurities and complications of his romantic masquerade. It is Carlyle himself who discourses under the guise of the erudite Professor Teufelsdröckh, who fills the chair of Things-in-General at the University of No-One-Knows-Where. It was his own intense purpose that was voiced in that ringing appeal at the close of the famous chapter on *The Everlasting Yea*: —

"I too could now say to myself: Be no longer a Chaos, but a World, or even Worldkin. Produce! Produce! Were

it but the pitifullest infinitesimal fraction of a Product, produce it in God's name! 'T is the utmost thou hast in thee: out with it then. Up, up! Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy whole might. Work while it is called To-day; for the Night cometh, wherein no man can work."

In spite of its singular form, the *Sartor Resartus* must be recognized as one of the most stimulating and impressive books of the century.

Lecturer and Historian.

In 1834 the family removed to Chelsea in the suburbs of London, and three years later Carlyle appeared in a course of six public lectures upon German literature. A year later this was followed by a course of twelve lectures on the successive *Periods of European Culture;* and in 1839 by a series upon *The Revolutions of Modern Europe.* The famous course *On Heroes, Hero Worship, and the Heroic in History* was given in 1840. The matter and the manner of these lectures made a profound sensation in literary London. "It was," said Leigh Hunt, "as if some Puritan had come to life again, liberalized by German philosophy and his own intense reflections and experiences." The central thought in this, one of Carlyle's most characteristic works, is that "universal history, the history of what man has accomplished in this world, is at bottom the history of the great men who have worked here." In proof of his idea, he therefore treats in the successive lectures of (1) the hero as *divinity*, taking Odin for his type, (2) as *prophet*, using Mahomet for illustration, (3) as *poet*, with Dante and Shakespeare for examples, (4) as *priest*, making Luther and Knox the central figures, (5) as *man of letters*, finding three literary heroes in Johnson, Burns, and Rousseau, (6) as *king*, Cromwell and Napoleon standing for the qualities he exalts.

Since his arrival in London Carlyle had been busy upon his historical studies. In 1837 the work was completed and the *History of the French Revolution* appeared. Its author's fame was now assured. With an extraordinary skill he portrayed the figures prominent in that struggle, and with almost appalling realism painted the events of that dramatic epoch. The peculiarities of his style were not inappropriate to the theme. The work was recognized as a masterpiece in its kind.

Political Essays and Biographies.

In *Chartism* (1839), *Past and Present* (1843), and *Latter-Day Pamphlets* (1850), Carlyle's criticism of society grows querulous; he works upon a distinctly lower level than in his earlier essays. But *Cromwell's Letters and Speeches* (1845) and the *Life of John Sterling* (1851) are model biographies and belong with his best works. Finally his *History of the Life and Times of Frederick, commonly Called the Great* (1858–65), came as a fitting climax to his literary labors.

Just after delivering his remarkable address at Edinburgh, upon his installation as Lord Rector of the University, in April, 1866 — the crowning honor of his life — he received the news of his wife's death. By this event Carlyle was completely broken; although he lived until 1881, honored by the world which he had criticised and often abused, he produced nothing further of importance.

Place in Literature.

It is, after all, as a teacher that Carlyle is to be regarded; and as has been true of many another, the spirit in which he taught and the manner of his teaching have proved of greater value to the world he endeavored to instruct than the mere matter of the lessons in the course. Thomas Carlyle is one of the great original influences in the moral life of his

century. The stimulus of his vigorous, pitiless pen is felt in the thought and sympathies of scores of lesser teachers who, perhaps, have worked unconscious of their debt to him.

Suggestions for Study.

Selections from Carlyle, edited by H. W. Boynton (Allyn & Bacon), contains the essay on *History*, the essays on *Burns* and *Boswell's Johnson*, and the two lectures on *The Hero as Poet* and *The Hero as Man of Letters*. These selections will furnish a good introduction to Carlyle. In undertaking the study of *Sartor Resartus*, the student should have the text edited by Archibald MacMechan, in the *Athenæum Press Series* (Ginn). The ideas advanced in these essays should not be slipped over without consideration and discussion. The verbal oddities, the coinage of new words, the grotesque use of old ones, should be noted and investigated; striking examples may well be recorded as interesting specimens of peculiar usage. The composition of sentences should be studied, and the description of Teufelsdröckh's failings in this regard be read in chapter iv. of *Sartor Resartus*. Carlyle's remarkable imagery, his figures of speech, will attract attention; note the sources from which they are drawn and the effectiveness with which they are applied. Find illustrations of his power in ridicule, in pathos, in humor. Study the humor of Carlyle; it is unique in its quality and its expression. Note the extraordinary earnestness and evident sincerity of his style. Examine his portraitures of persons, of their appearance, their character. Energy rather than grace will be found to be a marked distinction of Carlyle.

Brief Bibliography.

The chief biographer of Carlyle is J. A. Froude, although his taste in editing the papers of the essayist has been severely criticised. The *Carlyle* in the *English Men of Letters Series* is by J. Nichol; the *Life* in the *Great Writers Series* is by Richard Garnett. The *Reminiscences* of Carlyle himself are edited by C. E. Norton. There are important essays upon Carlyle by Lowell in *My Study Windows*, by E. P. Whipple in *Essays and Reviews*,

by Emerson in *English Traits*, and by Matthew Arnold in *Discourses in America*. A suggestive piece of criticism is Augustine Birrell's *Carlyle* in *Obiter Dicta*.

For the analysis of Carlyle's prose style, see Minto's *English Prose Writers* (Ginn).

John Ruskin, 1819-1900.

John Ruskin, third in this group of the great essayists, is in many aspects of his work sympathetically related to Carlyle. In the latter and more characteristic period of his life, the resemblance is marked. Both men spoke boldly on the great principles of human conduct; both threw themselves passionately into their books. The style of each was distinct, but there was a similarity of temper: the same fiery heat of conviction in their expression, the same passion for truth and justice in both. They came of the common stock, and were proud of that distinction: —

"My mother was a sailor's daughter, and, please you, one of my aunts was a baker's wife, the other a tanner's; and I don't know much more about my family, except that there used to be a green-grocer of the name in a small shop near the Crystal Palace,"

wrote Ruskin in one of his letters to workingmen.[1]

Their lives were devoted to the moral education of their countrymen; their genius was spent in bringing their own idealism to bear upon the experiences of common life.

Boyhood and Early Tastes.

John Ruskin was born in London. His father was a wine merchant who had grown wealthy in trade. Upon his death his son caused this inscription, "He was an entirely honest merchant," to be placed as his tribute to the integrity of the man. Ruskin's mother was a person of cultured tastes, a strict disciplinarian, vitally interested in the education and moral training of her son.

[1] *Fors Clavigera.*

"Being always summarily whipped," he says, "if I cried, did not do as I was bid, or tumbled on the stairs, I soon attained serene and secure methods of life and motion." [1]

Both parents were lovers of good pictures and good books; and under favoring conditions the boy came to discriminate and appreciate the best in literature and art. He read daily with his mother: on week days from Pope's *Homer* or the novels of Scott; on Sundays *Robinson Crusoe* and the *Pilgrim's Progress*. Evenings his father was accustomed to read aloud from Scott, Shakespeare, Byron, or Cervantes; and to these readings he was privileged to listen. With the Bible, more than with any other book, John Ruskin was made familiar; and to this feature of his early training he attributed the possession of those qualities which give such distinction to his prose style. Under his parents' direction, too, he grew familiar with the beauty of flower and foliage, the charm of landscape, and the best productions of creative art. In summer excursions the family traveled through the most picturesque parts of England and Scotland, visiting the points of principal historic interest, inspecting the picture galleries, studying both nature and art by the way. Upon his fourteenth birthday the boy received from his father as a gift a copy of Rogers's *Italy*, illustrated by Turner. The next summer he saw for the first time Italy and the Alps; this experience he ever afterward regarded as his entrance into life.

In 1836, at the age of seventeen, Ruskin became a student in Christ Church College, Oxford. **The Student of Art.** He won the Newdigate prize in the competition in verse, with his poem *Salsette and Elephanta*, and contributed to various magazine articles upon painting and architecture. In 1840 he left the University

[1] *Præterita.*

on account of poor health, and for two years traveled much upon the continent and in England. He was able, however, to receive his degree in 1842. Like Carlyle, Ruskin had been intended for the Church; but the allurements of art were too strong to be ignored; he determined to devote his life to study and criticism, and followed up his resolve by publishing the first volume of *Modern Painters* in 1843.

The Period of Art Criticism.

From the appearance of the first volume of this great work in 1843 until the publication of the last in 1860, John Ruskin was recognized as the foremost authority in art criticism, and as a master of English composition. His earliest criticism was a defense of the methods of the English artist, J. M. W. Turner, whom he ranked as "the greatest painter of all time." In the successive volumes of *Modern Painters*, with a diction and style unrivaled in English literature, Ruskin discussed, not only the productions, but the abstract principles of art. The great lesson that he taught was the fundamental importance of Truth. The main business of art, as he declared, "is its service in the actual uses of daily life." "The giving of brightness to pictures is much, but the giving brightness to life, more." Two other important works, together with several of relatively minor importance, belong to this period of his life: *The Seven Lamps of Architecture* appeared in 1849, *Stones of Venice* in 1851–53; in both the writer dwelt strenuously upon the moral aspects of art. Ruskin's intimate connection with the group of the Pre-Raphaelites, including William Morris, Holman Hunt, Rossetti, Burne-Jones, and Sir John Millais, was emphasized by the publication of *Pre-Raphaelitism* in 1851. Here he defined the leading principle of that famous brotherhood to be the painting

"of things as they probably did look and happen, not as, by rules of art developed under Raphael, they might be supposed gracefully, deliciously, or sublimely to have happened."

The year 1860 marks a turning-point in Ruskin's career. The practical needs of men now forced themselves, to the exclusion of all other subjects, upon his thought. He became a teacher of practical ethics, a political economist, a student of sociological problems, and a promulgator of ideas which were then considered radical and unsafe — doctrines that aroused hostility, even contempt. *Unto this Last* (1860) and *Munera Pulveris* (1863) were the works in which he outlined the principles of his social science. The relations between employer and employed, the problem of wages, the basis of the science in absolute justice, the real sources of wealth, the evils of the competitive system, the rights of property — these and kindred topics were discussed in a spirit entirely new to the readers of that time; it is a fact, however, that almost all the propositions then thought so dangerous to the interests of the state have been either adopted or seriously discussed by the practical economists of the present.

The Ethical Teacher.

In the first of a series of ninety-six monthly letters addressed to the workingmen of England under the peculiar title *Fors Clavigera* [1] (1871–78), Ruskin describes characteristically his personal attitude at that time and the reasons for it: —

"For my own part," he says, "I will put up with this state

[1] In the second of these *Letters* Ruskin defines this enigmatical title: *Fors* may mean *Force*, *Fortitude*, or *Fortune*; *Clava*, a *Club*, *Clavis*, a *Key*, *Clavus*, a *Nail*; *Gero* means *I carry*. From these meanings, therefore, we may interpret the title in three ways: —

Fors, the Club-bearer, means the strength of Hercules, or of Deed.
Fors, the Key-bearer, means the strength of Ulysses, or of Patience.
Fors, the Nail-bearer, means the strength of Lycurgus, or of Law.

of things, passively, not an hour longer. I am not an unselfish person, nor an Evangelical one; I have no particular pleasure in doing good; neither do I dislike doing it so much as to expect to be rewarded for it in another world. But I simply cannot paint, nor read, nor look at minerals, nor do anything else that I like, and the very light of the morning sky, when there is any — which is seldom, nowadays, near London — has become hateful to me, because of the misery that I know of, and see signs of where I know it not, which no imagination can interpret too bitterly."

In this spirit, and with this determination, he wrote and taught throughout the pages of the twenty-three or twenty-four books published during this second period of his life.

Remaining Works.

In *Sesame and Lilies* (1865), his most popular essay, Ruskin discourses of *Kings' Treasuries* and of *Queens' Gardens:* the first deals with books and reading; the second with the education and duties of women. *The Crown of Wild Olive* (1866) contains three lectures on *Work*, *Traffic*, and *War*. *The Queen of the Air* (1869) is a study of Greek myths of Cloud and Storm. *Love's Meinie* (1873) is a study of Birds; *Proserpina* (1874) a study of Wayside Flowers. In *Ethics of the Dust* (1865) Ruskin gives a series of charming *Lectures to Little Housewives on the Elements of Crystallization;* in *Deucalion* (1876) a series of *Studies on the Lapse of Waves and the Life of Stones*. Several volumes of lectures upon art [1] are also included among his many works. Finally, in 1887, a most interesting autobiography, under the title *Præterita*, appeared, his final work.

The burden of Ruskin's message to the world has been to open men's eyes to the beauty that is in nature,

[1] For the most part delivered at Oxford, where Ruskin held the Slade Lectureship on Art.

in true art, and in right life. No other has ever approached him, even among the poets, in the description of river and rock, of plant and leaf, of cloud and sky — of all natural phenomena — in that imaginative vision which sees into the life of things. A wave breaking upon the rocks is "one moment a flint cave; the next a marble pillar; the next a mere white fleece thickening the thundery rain." The serpent is "that running brook of horror on the ground," "that rivulet of smooth silver;" "startle it, — the winding stream will become a twisted arrow; the wave of poisoned life will lash through the grass like a cast lance." His sense of color is a revelation: in describing the effect of light upon an opaque white mass like a cloud, an Alp, or Milan Cathedral, he talks of amber tints, of orange, of rose, of lemon yellows, of vermilion, of flamingo color, canary; of blushes and flames of color; when the cloud is transparent, then he speaks of golden and ruby colors, of scarlets, of Tyrian crimson and Byzantine purple; of full blue at the zenith, and green blue nearer the horizon,

Theory in Life.

"the keynote of the opposition being vermilion against green blue, both of equal tone, and at such a height and acme of brilliancy that you cannot see the line where their edges pass into each other."

To see these things, to be impressed by them, and to be influenced thereby for good: this is the purpose of his teaching. The first article subscribed to by the members of St. George's Guild, a socialistic society established by Ruskin in 1873, is as follows: —

"I trust in the living God, Father Almighty, Maker of Heaven and Earth, and of all things and creatures, visible and invisible. I trust in the kindness of His law, and the goodness of His work. And I will strive to love Him and to keep His law, and *to see His work while I live.*"

The social theories he had propounded Ruskin did his best to realize in practical experiments, to which he devoted the bulk of his fortune; the sympathies to which he had so fervently appealed found consistent expression in his personal relations with men. He established museums, art schools, and libraries, assisted young men and women to get an education, organized movements for improving the dwellings of the poor. His influence over his students and among the readers of his essays has been very marked. Modern movements in socialistic directions have embodied many of his ideas.

The last years of John Ruskin's life were spent in retirement upon his estate of Brantwood, on Lake Coniston, in the country of Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Southey; here he died, in his eightieth year, January 20, 1900.

Suggestions for Study.

As a text-book for the study of Ruskin, the volume of *Selections* edited by Mrs. L. G. Hufford (Ginn) is admirable. A smaller volume, *An Introduction to the Writings of John Ruskin*, edited by Vida D. Scudder (Sibley & Ducker), contains briefer passages and single paragraphs illustrative of Ruskin's peculiar style. The two essays of *Sesame and Lilies*[1] would best be taken as the first selections to be read. It will be found helpful to make an outline of each essay, that the student may clearly trace the progress of the thought and fix the specific points maintained. Notice particularly Ruskin's statements concerning the motives for securing an education, his comments upon "books," how to read books, his analysis of the passage from *Lycidas*, the sympathetic attitude toward authors, his denunciation of the commercial spirit in the British public, the childishness of the nation, the discussion of false kings and true, and the description of the ideal library. These points are brought out in the first lecture: what are the

[1] Published in Number 142 of the *Riverside Literature Series*.

links that logically connect these successive topics? Analyze the second lecture. What is its relation to the first? What is its final purpose? What do you think of the part given to woman in the social order? What use is made of "books" in the argument? Do you accept the statements regarding Shakespeare's heroes and heroines? Is it not odd that Ruskin does not produce George Eliot among his witnesses? What is Ruskin's plan for the education of women? Do you agree with him that women should not undertake the study of theology? How does the essayist differentiate the girl's nature from the boy's — woman's work from man's?

The Queen of the Air is suggested as the next volume for study. Mrs. Hufford's analysis of the work will be found very helpful in keeping the relations of the various parts distinct. Notice the beautiful descriptive paragraphs so numerous in these essays; study the diction closely, — the marvelous significance of words, the startling effectiveness of phrase. Notice also the didactic element, the sermonizing quality, in the work.

The three essays taken from *Unto this Last* and the six letters from *Fors Clavigera* should be read as illustrating Ruskin's views upon economic problems. *The Crown of Wild Olive* should be read by every young man; *Ethics of the Dust* by every young woman. Selections, at least, from *Modern Painters* and *Stones of Venice* must be read by all who would know of Ruskin as the great word artist of our language and be familiar with his famous interpretations of nature and art. His wonderful descriptive power, his splendor of diction, his impetuous eloquence, are to be found in these works as nowhere else.

Brief Bibliography.

The authoritative *Life of Ruskin* is that by W. G. Collingwood (2 vols.) The *Ruskin* in the *English Men of Letters Series* is by Frederick Harrison. Critical studies are numerous; the following are most helpful: *John Ruskin, His Life and Teaching*, by J. R. Mather; *The Work of John Ruskin*, by Charles Waldstein; and *John Ruskin, Social Reformer*, by J. A. Hobson.

John Ruskin (personal reminiscences), by M. H. Spielmann, and the chapter on Ruskin in Frederic Harrison's *Tennyson, Ruskin, and Other Literary Estimates*, are recent and valuable. A beautifully illustrated article upon *Ruskin as an Artist*, by M. H. Spielmann, in *Scribner's Magazine* for December, 1898, will be especially interesting. Critical articles of some value were published by Julia Wedgewood, in the *Contemporary Review*, March, 1900; by W. C. Brownell, in *Scribner's Magazine*, April, 1900; and by W. P. P. Longfellow, in the *Forum*, May, 1900. A bitterly hostile criticism appeared in *Blackwood's* for March of the same year. Ruskin's picturesque account of his own life in *Præterita* must not be overlooked.

Matthew Arnold, 1822-88.

In the criticism of life and conduct, the essays of Matthew Arnold hold an important place. Son of the famous Arnold of Rugby, a graduate of that school and of Oxford, Matthew Arnold has won distinction as an apostle of Culture, as a means of attaining the ideal type. The tone of his criticism has been purely intellectual, often supercilious, and more likely to awaken prejudice than popularity. The literary quality of his work places him with the best of our prose writers. His style is vivacious, without enthusiasm, terse and luminous. His manner is severely classical, as far as possible removed from the rough impetuosity of Carlyle and the ornate eloquence of Macaulay or Ruskin. An undertone of skepticism and despondency runs through all of Arnold's work; but his impartiality of judgment, his keen, passionless intellect, his almost infallible taste, make his criticism in the highest degree valuable. His *Essays in Criticism* (1865), including the essay on *The Function of Criticism at the Present Time*, furnished a model in this field of literary art. Besides this volume and a second series of *Essays in Criticism*

(1888), Arnold's principal prose works are *Culture and Anarchy* (1869), *Literature and Dogma* (1873), and the *Discourses in America* (1885).

Matthew Arnold holds high rank, also, among the Victorian poets; his poems are the finest expressions of the purely classic spirit in our literature. *The Scholar Gypsy*, *Thyrsis* (like *Adonais*, an elegy upon the death of a poet — in this instance Arthur Hugh Clough), the *Stanzas from the Grande Chartreuse*, and the epic of *Sohrab and Rustum* are the best examples of his verse.

John Henry Newman, author of the beautiful hymn *Lead Kindly Light*, was a force in the great religious movement of the second quarter of the century, known as the "Oxford Movement." With Arnold and Pater, he is recognized as one of the more recent masters of style in English prose. His essays, most of them controversial, followed his admission to the Roman Catholic Church in 1842. Best known is his *Apologia pro Sua Vita*, a defense of his sincerity and a history of his religious life.

John Henry Newman, 1801-90.

Like Arnold — a pronounced classicist in literary taste — Walter Pater stands high among recent prose writers. His volume of literary criticism, entitled *Appreciations, with an Essay on Style* (1889), suggests a distinct resemblance to the critical methods of Arnold. The *Imaginary Portraits* (1887) remind us of Landor's *Conversations*, although entirely original in conception and performance. Pater's most popular work, *Marius the Epicurean*, is a remarkable portraiture of pagan character. It is the fictitious biography of a Roman youth who, interested in the philosophies of his time, passes through many experiences mentally and spiritually, at last coming in contact with the adherents of the new faith. His other works include studies of *The Re*

Walter Pater, 1839-94.

naissance, *Plato and Platonism*, a series of *Greek Studies*, and a volume of miscellaneous essays. The essayist lived a secluded life largely within the University precincts (he was a fellow of Brasenose College, Oxford), devoting himself to study and the perfection of his exquisite style.

VI. MATURITY OF THE ENGLISH NOVEL: DICKENS, THACKERAY, GEORGE ELIOT.

Among the literary movements of the past century there is none more interesting or more significant than that which had its climax in the art of three great novelists, whose common power in the delineation of life and the portrayal of character may well be taken as the highest expression yet made of the possibilities that lie in the field of prose fiction. The evolution of the modern novel is an impressive proof of our highly developed interest in the problems and struggles of real life. Not only has this form of imaginative composition been employed to portray manners, temperaments, and types; it has become in the hands of thoughtful men and women a valuable instrument for the illustration of ideas upon every conceivable subject, in the fields of sociology, commerce, religion, politics, and even of medicine; until at the close of the old century and the beginning of the new, the novel appears as the chief form of literary expression, its scope bounded only by the fundamental principles of all imaginative art, and with a hold upon the public interest as noteworthy as the wonderful fertility manifested in its production.

The history of English fiction is a record of two contending influences: the preference for idealization in the delineation of life, and the preference for a faithful report of close observation and analysis; the former is illustrated in the methods of the roman-

ticists, the latter in those of the realists. While the terms *romanticism* and *realism* are sometimes rather broadly used, especially in the later classification of novelists, the two tendencies indicated are generally clear: the realism of the eighteenth century novelists is one thing; the romanticism of Scott is obviously another. The method of each group is legitimate, and the work of each school is excellent in its own degree.

The Contrasted Tendencies.

At the very beginning of the century there were not wanting experiments in the realistic study of life. Indeed, two excellent examples are found even earlier in *Evelina* (1778) and *Cecilia* (1782), the work of Frances Burney, that talented woman who, as Madame D'Arblay, became the subject of one of Macaulay's essays. Both of these novels are bright and interesting studies of contemporary society; modeled somewhat on Richardson's *Clarissa*, and forming an important link between the earlier and the later novel of manners.

Frances Burney, 1752-1840.

Maria Edgeworth was the author of some admirable Irish tales in which she endeavored to portray the actual condition of the Irish peasantry as she had observed it. Her *Castle Rackrent* (1800) and *The Absentee* (1812) are the best examples of her work. Three novels — *Leonora*, *Patronage*, *Belinda* — represent a serious attempt to reproduce types in fashionable life. These tales were told with a moral purpose in view.

Maria Edgeworth, 1767-1849.

By far the most clever realist of that day was Jane Austen, who, although mockingly referred to as "poor little Jane" by certain critics of our own time, has nevertheless more than held her own with novel readers even of the present. The life of this gifted woman was most simple and most quiet. Her home was a village rectory in Hamp-

Jane Austen, 1775-1817.

shire; her only dissipation an occasional visit to the fashionable watering-place, Bath. No notable incidents appear to have broken the calm current of her daily life; no serious romance is known to have absorbed her mind. Quietly as she lived she wrote. Her intimate friends were hardly aware of her occupation or her talent. And it is a very quiet phase of life that Jane Austen has described, although her art is strong enough to make commonplace scenes appear eventful and the commonest characters important. There had been no one since Fielding and Sterne gifted with such power in the realistic touches which exhibit character; and Miss Austen's realism was more refined if not more subtle than theirs. The most sensational occurrence in her pages is an elopement which ends with a due respect for the proprieties. The moral purpose is strong in *Sense and Sensibility* (1811) and *Pride and Prejudice* (1813), her most ambitious novels — the titles of which suggest the lessons they inculcate. *Northanger Abbey* (1818) is written in the spirit of satire, and the humorous misadventures of the romantically inclined young heroine are shafts capitally aimed against the grotesque romances of the *Udolpho* type. Miss Austen was a minute observer: microscopic is the word to be used of her method in observation and treatment. With painstaking accuracy each detail of every process is described. Sir Walter paid her a remarkable compliment: —

"That young lady has a talent for describing the involvements of feelings and characters of ordinary life which is to me the most wonderful I ever met with. The big bow-wow strain I can do myself, like any now going; but the exquisite touch which renders ordinary commonplace things and characters interesting from the truth of the description and the sentiment is denied to me."

So far as this applies to Jane Austen, Scott's words are eminently true. Besides the works already mentioned, Miss Austen wrote also *Mansfield Park* (1814), *Emma* (1816), and *Persuasion* (1818). *Pride and Prejudice* is her ablest novel. These stories were published anonymously, and although the secret of their authorship leaked out, they were never avowed by Miss Austen as her work. Their real merit was not generally appreciated until after the early death of their author, but the fame which came so tardily shows no sign of waning. Next to Scott there is no author of that time whose works are read with so much real enjoyment to-day as quiet, homely, wholesome Jane Austen.

Edward Bulwer-Lytton, 1803-73.

Dominated in his best efforts by the powerful influence of Scott's great historical romances, Edward Bulwer, Lord Lytton, was the chief exemplar in that school of fiction during the second quarter of the century. But his work does not all of it represent the romantic school. A man of remarkable versatility and industry, he published three novels, — *Pelham* (1828), *Paul Clifford* (1830), and *Eugene Aram* (1832); the first introduces a hero who is representative of high life and enters politics; the other two are studies in criminal character, the second exposing the bad effects of "a vicious prison discipline and a sanguinary criminal code." These were followed by four historical novels of wide popularity and genuine power, — *The Last Days of Pompeii* (1834), *Rienzi* (1835), *The Last of the Barons* (1843), and *Harold* (1843). In these works Bulwer's romanticism is at its best. He is more serious in his purpose to relate history than is Scott, less successful in the construction of narrative; yet the first named of the series is perhaps the most widely

read work in historical fiction. Somewhat in the spirit of Sterne, Bulwer produced *The Caxtons* (1849) and *My Novel* (1853), — two works dealing with modern life in a semi-realistic fashion. It is, however, as a romanticist that Bulwer holds his place in literature, a position reinforced by the great success of his two romantic dramas, *The Lady of Lyons* and *Richelieu* (1838). In a third group of novels — *Zanoni* (1842), *The Haunted and the Haunters* (1859), and *A Strange Story* (1862) — the romanticism is of the older gothic type, depending upon the supernatural and occult to supply the exciting interest.

Benjamin Disraeli, 1804-81.

The novels of political and fashionable life, written by Lord Beaconsfield between the years 1826 and 1880, were romantic rather than realistic efforts, brilliant but superficial; they have never held a very high place among the serious creations of imaginative literature. The appearance of *Vivian Grey*, the first, in 1826, created something of a sensation among readers, but its artificial character was soon recognized. When *Lothair* was published in 1870, an anonymous reviewer in *Blackwood's*, evidently a political friend of the novelist, remarked that "on the whole, we had rather Mr. Gladstone had written it" — Mr. Gladstone being at the time the vigorous antagonist of the party represented by Disraeli and his friends.

The Realistic Movement.

For the rest, idealism and realism mingle in the broadening current of later English fiction. Now and again the realist has yielded to the fascination of some romantic motive drawn from historical sources, or to the charm of a period filled with intense dramatic interest; and thus we get *A Tale of Two Cities* or *The Cloister and the Hearth*, a *Henry Esmond*, an *Hypatia*, or a *Romola*.

But the conspicuous tendency of the English novel, almost to the close of the century, has been in the direction of a realistic portrayal of our common life. The great novelists who represent the best achievements in fiction during the Victorian age are essentially realists in purpose and method. Nineteenth century realism is an advance upon that of the eighteenth century. Not only has the field of observation been wonderfully extended, but mere observation has gradually given place to a close, almost scientific study of conditions and types; the art of delineation has, on the whole, improved; an honest sympathy has displaced much shallow sentiment; and as a result of it all we have arrived at a clearer and more truthful account of society and human character, a more profound and accurate report of life, than the earlier novelists were able to give.

Charles Dickens, 1812-70.

First of the great modern novelists to find inspiration in the material of everyday affairs was Charles Dickens, the story of whose progress toward fame is as sensational as that which supplies the plot of any of his famous novels. Indeed many of the details of that life, so wretched and so lonely in its beginnings, may be detected only half-disguised by the imagination of the story-teller in the chapters of *Little Dorrit*, *Copperfield*, *Nickleby*, and *Oliver Twist*.

The Struggle to Success.

Charles Dickens was born in a suburb of Portsmouth in Hampshire, where his father, John Dickens, was a clerk attached to the service of the navy yard; but two years after the birth of Charles the family made one or two removes, and were living in extremely poor circumstances in a miserable quarter of London when the boy was about ten years old. Readers of *David Copperfield*[1] will

[1] Ch. xi.

recall brief glimpses of the harsh experiences that fell in the childhood of the hero: the wretched life in the London streets, the dismal days of toil in the warehouse, the hunger, the depression, the misery of the sensitive, delicate lad.

"When I had money enough, I used to get half-a-pint of ready made coffee and a slice of bread and butter. When I had none, I used to look at a venison-shop in Fleet-street; or I have strolled, at such a time, as far as Covent Garden Market, and stared at the pine-apples. . . . I know that I worked, from morning until night, with common men and boys, a shabby child. I know that I lounged about the streets, insufficiently and unsatisfactorily fed. I know that, but for the mercy of God, I might easily have been, for any care that was taken of me, a little robber or a little vagabond."

The novelist has in these lines by no means exaggerated his own unhappy lot. The humorous account of Mr. Micawber's financial troubles is based upon the actual and more serious circumstances of his own family affairs. When Charles was ten, a succession of misfortunes culminated in his father's imprisonment for debt, and at that helpless age the boy, entirely dependent upon his own resources, was thrown a waif upon the world. Through long monotonous days he toiled in the cellar of a blacking factory on the river-side, washing the empty bottles and pasting labels on the filled ones, trudging home at night, four miles, to a lonely room, — a lodging destined to a degree of fame somewhat later as the abiding-place of the irrepressible Bob Sawyer, — and spending his Sundays with his parents inside the damp walls of old Marshalsea prison. After his father's release things went a little better. Charles was placed in a private school for three or four years, where he read all the novels on which he could lay his hands, and whence he emerged in time to become

a shorthand reporter at seventeen; but it was not until he was twenty-two that he obtained a permanent position on the staff of a London newspaper. And now comes the story of the first literary success, a story which brings us nearer to the personality of Dickens, perhaps, than that of any other recorded incident in his career. With all the hopes and all the misgivings of a beginner just making his first timid venture upon the sea of literary effort, the young reporter one day, shyly and by stealth, drops his first original manuscript into the letter-box of a publisher. Upon the day of issue this new contributor buys a copy of the magazine upon the street. He scarcely dares to open the cover. So nervous is he that it is a little while before he succeeds in finding the table of contents; but when at last he discovers therein the title of a certain sketch by "Boz," the sensitive, emotional spirit of the man is not to be restrained; ashamed to meet the curious eyes of the crowds who fill the busy Strand, Dickens plunges into the nearest doorway to sob out for a moment the emotion too acute to be concealed. Perhaps it was this quick sensibility in the novelist that brought him now and then so dangerously near the verge of sentiment of a less wholesome type; and this quality it is, perhaps, which accounts in part for the fact that no one of the great novelists arouses so strong partisanship as the creator of Dombey, David Copperfield, and Little Nell.

The Novels.

In 1836 there appeared the first of a series of humorous sketches depicting the adventures and misadventures of a party of Cockney sportsmen. The illustrations were supplied by Seymour, a popular comic draughtsman; the chapters were written by "Boz."[1] The result of the plan was the inimit-

[1] This pen-name, used by Dickens at the beginning of his career,

able volume of *Pickwick Papers*, completed in 1837. Then Dickens set seriously at work. The first real novel was *Oliver Twist* (1838), a Defoe-like study of low, criminal types. *Nicholas Nickleby* followed in 1839, in which the material was drawn from middle-class life. With almost unparalleled fertility of creative power, *The Old Curiosity Shop* and *Barnaby Rudge* were completed in 1841, *Martin Chuzzlewit* in 1843. *The Christmas Tales* appeared in 1843, '46, and '48. *Dombey and Son* was finished in 1848, *David Copperfield* in 1850. *Bleak House* (1853), *Hard Times* (1854), and *Little Dorrit* (1857) followed. *A Tale of Two Cities* came in 1859, *The Uncommercial Traveller* and *Great Expectations* in 1861, *Our Mutual Friend* in 1865, and the last novel, *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*, was left unfinished by the author's death. Besides this list of novels, Dickens's works comprise many sketches, the *American Notes*, the *Pictures from Italy*, and *The Child's History of England*. At various times he was the editor of several periodicals, including a popular magazine, *All the Year Round*. He traveled considerably and gave many public readings in Great Britain and America. Throughout his life he took a deep interest in the stage; had had ambitions to be an actor, and at different times participated in both private and public performances with great enthusiasm and an almost professional success. His popularity as a novelist was immense; and at the height of his success he died suddenly, falling from his chair while still at work, worn out by the strain.

Walter Besant has called Dickens "the prophet of the middle class." It was with the experiences of this

was his little sister's corruption of the name Moses, which Dickens had playfully applied to his younger brother; it was originally borrowed from *The Vicar of Wakefield*.

class that his pages are stored; it was the middle class of society in the great metropolis of London that he knew, although it was not always the London of his own era that he described. Within the world of London life what a multitude of types he saw — what humor, what pathos, what tragedy! There is exaggeration everywhere in his portraitures, in his sentiment, in his humor, in his facts; but this exaggeration is a legitimate feature of Dickens's method, a sort of natural hyperbole which does not spoil the reality of his creations: it is the natural exaggeration of the artist who throws the features of his subject into high relief. His eye was quick to see that one peculiar trait in mental or moral make-up which stamps a man a "character." This oddity of temperament was as obvious and insistent as any eccentricity of motion or accident of physique which excites our pity, our laughter, or disgust. The painter of Uriah Heep, of Smike, of Squeers, of Pickwick, and of Quilp shaded heavily and made a daring use of color; but Dickens's characters are something more than mere caricatures of men and women — they bear all the marks of life.

Characteristics.

We think inevitably of Charles Dickens as the great representative humorist in English fiction. The *Pickwick Papers* excited the laughter of the world; the spirit of comedy, if not of farce, runs side by side with that of a deeper sentiment in almost all his works. But a humanitarian motive is as clearly evident in all his important novels. The misfortunes of the poor, the sufferings of the oppressed, affected his sympathies profoundly. His sensibility was touched, his passion aroused, by any tale of abuse. He was the first of novelists to depict the sorrows of friendless childhood; he loved to create child characters like the little cripple, Tiny Tim, Pip

The Philanthropic Purpose.

in *Great Expectations*, Paul Dombey, and Little Nell. No writer has surpassed him in the pathos with which he describes the death of children. Abuses of authority in prisons, in workhouses, the injustice of the law's delays, cruelty inflicted upon children in a private school — these, once suggested, kindled his imagination into flame; indignation has rarely expressed itself more hotly than that which speaks in the satire of *Nicholas Nickleby*, *Bleak House*, and *Oliver Twist*.

It was all real to the novelist. He shouted with laughter, or burst into tears as his characters ran their predestined course over the sheets of manuscript beneath his pen. And the world of readers wept and laughed with him when the books were in their hands. In the present generation something of the sentiment has lost its force; but the position of Dickens as a prince among story-tellers is still secure.

William Makepeace Thackeray, 1811-63.

In 1848, the year in which Charles Dickens, already famous, completed his sixth successful novel, *Dombey and Son*, another writer, comparatively unknown, won his way to fame as the author of a serial just finished, — *Vanity Fair*. Thackeray was born at Calcutta, where his father was employed in the civil service of the East India Company. Five years after his son's birth Richmond Thackeray died, and shortly after the boy was sent to England to be educated. At ten he was placed in the Charterhouse School, and afterward went to Cambridge. Thackeray remained but two years at the University, and then began the study of law. This profession he found distasteful; he had a unique talent for drawing and was ambitious to become an artist. Abandoning his law books, he finally determined to go abroad, and spent some months traveling over Europe studying art in Paris and Rome. When a change

occurred in the family fortunes, compelling him to begin work in earnest, Thackeray, like Dickens, became a journalist, and soon found the path which led to his brilliant literary career.

Thackeray found a ready reception for all the sketches that he could write. He became a regular contributor to several magazines, and under the name of Michael Angelo Titmarsh he published in *Fraser's* his burlesque of *The Great Hoggarty Diamond* and the narrative of *Barry Lyndon* — the latter a satirical novel like Fielding's *Jonathan Wild*, and taking for its hero an eighteenth century adventurer of the picaresque type. *The Yellowplush Papers*, *The Paris Sketch Book*, and *The Irish Sketch Book* also belong to this early group. In 1842 Thackeray joined the staff of *Punch*, to which he contributed *Jeames' Diary* and *The Book of Snobs*. His chosen field was satire, and his first great novel, *Vanity Fair*, revealed his power as that of a master in the art.

Unimportant Works.

It was not the world of which Dickens wrote that we find described in Thackeray's fictions. In many ways the work of the latter novelist represents a revolt from the methods and the matter of his immediate predecessors, and even from his contemporary, Dickens. Thackeray did not believe in heroes and heroines, nor did he take much interest in efforts for reform. His great model was Fielding, and there was no idealization of the types he selected for portrayal. Through his benignant-looking spectacles his sharp eyes peered through the shams and follies of the real society in which he moved. Bluntly enough he told the story of Vanity Fair, drawing his pictures of the adventuresses and the rogues who throng its lanes and crowd its booths. Like his master, Fielding, also, he frequently appears beside the stage of his

Vanity Fair.

little theatre to moralize upon the conduct of the puppets who perform for our amusement upon the scene. There is a strong element of cynicism in Thackeray's interpretation of the life portrayed. The dash and cunning of Becky Sharp compel the admiration that the respectable but foolish Amelia cannot command. The coarse brutishness of the sensual Lord Steyne, the superficial polish of young George Osborne, selfish and faithless, the hopeless stupidity of Rawdon Crawley, the gluttony and cowardice of Jos. Sedley — these portraitures, true enough to the types, are but poorly balanced by the placid, good-natured, honest dullness of Dobbin in this picture of London society in the era of Wellington and Waterloo.

The Other Great Novels.

Vanity Fair was followed by *Pendennis* in 1848–49 — a novel conceived in the realistic spirit and frankly modeled upon *Tom Jones*. In 1852 appeared Thackeray's most remarkable work, *Henry Esmond* — rather an historical romance than a realistic novel, and one of the great achievements of English fiction. In pleasant contrast to the methods of *Vanity Fair*, we are shown the ever attractive qualities of manly honor and womanly virtue, mutual affection, devotion, and loyalty — characteristic of the heroes and heroines we cannot but love. A peculiar feature of the book is its wonderful reconstruction of eighteenth century life in the very letter as well as the spirit of its age. The style of autobiographic narrative, the form in which the work is cast, was a severe test of its author's power; certainly no other novelist has achieved so great a success. Thackeray's fourth novel, *The Newcomes*, was written in 1853–55. Its tone is genial, as in *Esmond;* and the character of Colonel Newcome, a true-hearted English gentleman, is one of the most impressive portraitures

in our literature. *The Virginians* appeared in 1857–58 as a sequel to *Henry Esmond*.

In 1852 Thackeray had visited America, enjoying the hospitality of our own distinguished men of letters, lecturing upon *The English Humourists*. Again in 1855 he came — this time delivering his lectures upon *The Four Georges*. He became editor of *The Cornhill Magazine* in January, 1860, and contributed his last minor novels to that periodical. As he grew older he became despondent. His health failed, and before his friends were aware of his serious condition, upon Christmas eve, he died — alone; and, like his fellow novelist and friend, weary with his work.

Last Labors.

The mingling of romance and realism was exhibited in the singularly dramatic novel, *Jane Eyre*, which appeared in 1848, while *Vanity Fair* was still running through its monthly parts. This book produced a distinct sensation. Published under the pen-name of Currer Bell, a spirited discussion arose as to its authorship, when it was discovered to be the work of Charlotte Brontë, a minister's daughter in Yorkshire, one of three talented sisters, each of whom had tried her hand at novel-making, not without success. She wrote two other novels, *Shirley* (1849) and *Villette* (1853), but these fell short of her first success. In *Cranford* (1853) another woman, Mrs. Gaskell, produced a purely realistic study of the eccentricities and quiet humors of country life. She was also the author of other tales, some dealing with the problems of the employer and the employed, others with the study of evil and its effects. These stories had a decided influence upon the early work of George Eliot, and are among the first belonging to that type of fiction which

Charlotte Brontë, 1816-55. Elizabeth Gaskell, 1810-65.

analyzes motives and dissects character — the so-called psychological novel.

George Eliot, 1819-80.

With the publication of *Adam Bede* in 1859, George Eliot (Mary Ann Evans) took her place at the head of English novelists in the realistic school. She was born upon a farm in Warwickshire. Her early life was uneventful, but in her twenty-second year she passed through an important religious experience, and under the influence of the new speculations in science and continental skepticism, she abandoned her former evangelical faith. She then became identified with a group of free-thinkers, among whom John Stuart Mill, Herbert Spencer, and George Henry Lewes were prominent leaders. This radical change in her religious views was momentous in its effect upon her subsequent life.

Her Novels.

It was not until her thirty-eighth year that Miss Evans discovered her power as a writer of stories. In January, 1857, the first part of *Scenes of Clerical Life* appeared in *Blackwood's*, and an immediate interest was aroused in the work of this promising new author. The three *Scenes* thus introduced comprised *The Sad Fortunes of the Reverend Amos Barton*, *Mr. Gilfil's Love-Story*, and *Janet's Repentance*. They were psychological and realistic. *Adam Bede* (1859) met with a still greater success. The sad story of the erring Hetty and the fatal consequences of her fault was told with quiet power; the characters of Adam Bede and Dinah Morris were impressively real. Indeed much of the material of this novel was taken straight from nature. An aunt of the author was the original of the devoted woman preacher, and had really stood by the side of a poor girl condemned to death for the murder of her child. Many of the traits of George Eliot's own father are

reproduced in Adam Bede, and Mrs. Poyser, shrewd, sarcastic, hard-working, bears no small resemblance to Mrs. Evans, a serious, earnest-minded woman, a careful housekeeper, and possessed of a shrewish tongue.

In *The Mill on the Floss* (1860) there are many reminiscences of the Warwickshire home. Maggie Tulliver with her shaggy mane of incorrigible black hair, her passionate love for books, and her hunger for affection, is a picture of Mary Ann Evans in her girlhood. The relations between Maggie and her brother Tom are very similar to those existing between the real girl and her older brother, Isaac Evans. The humorous accounts of life as it runs among the Tullivers, the Gleggs, and the Pullets had their inspiration in well-remembered oddities of countryside society. George Eliot's most convincing characters were based upon actual observation.

Silas Marner, a model of compact art, was published in 1861, *Romola* in 1863. In this last great novel, with its impressive historical background of Florentine life in the age of Savonarola, we have a stern and powerful study of moral decay in the character of Tito Melema, which becomes the motive of chief dramatic interest, rather than the vivid picture of fifteenth century Florence in the acme of its pride. In *Felix Holt* (1866) the novelist returned to the conditions and problems of the present. *Middlemarch*, one of her strongest works, dealing with the moral failures of many lives, appeared as a serial in 1872. Her last important work, which fell considerably below her former efforts, however, in convincing force, was *Daniel Deronda* (1876).

George Eliot applied philosophy to the study of life as no previous novelist had done. Her characters were taken in the main from the common, the universal

brotherhood of ordinary people, without exaggeration, without distortion; they really seemed to have grown, like mortals. These characters she *interpreted*, as neither Scott nor Dickens nor Thackeray had attempted to do, analyzing their motives of action and relentlessly depicting the effect of every important act. She gave a moral weight to the literature of fiction which added materially to its worth. There is a heaviness of melancholy vaguely perceptible in the minor tones of all her works; to one familiar with the story of her own life experience this seriousness of tone is comprehensible. The stress of her own spiritual struggles, and the inevitable trials of her chosen situation, added, beyond a doubt, to the intelligence of her conceptions and the intensity of her feeling, while the intuitive optimism of her nature bade her proclaim the gospel of a triumphant perseverance rather than the hard doctrine of despair. Regarded as subjective embodiments of wholesome ideas, and considered technically as objective pictures of life and manners, wherein both humor and pathos mingle naturally — the human comedy and the human tragedy of actual existence — George Eliot's novels surpass all others in true realism; with that distinction they may justly claim the place of honor in English fiction.

The Philosophical Element.

The story of the English novel in the nineteenth century is by no means finished. Each of the great novelists has had his following among the lesser story-writers. The influence of Thackeray is seen in the work of Anthony Trollope, author of a long series of novels depicting the lives and fortunes of typical characters in various professions and callings. His first successful production was *The Warden* (1855); a continuation followed in *Barchester Towers* (1857). These two novels, together with

Anthony Trollope, 1815-82.

Framley Parsonage (1861), *Orley Farm*, *The Small House at Allington*, *Can you Forgive her*, and *The Last Chronicle of Barset* (1867), are his best representative works.

Charles Reade, 1814-84.

Many of the characteristics of Dickens are found in the novels of Reade. He shared the greater novelist's enthusiasm for the stage, and was the author of many plays. His first serious effort in fiction, *Peg Woffington* (1852), has for its heroine a noted eighteenth century actress, celebrated for her vivacity and beauty as well as for her art. Charles Reade was the author of eighteen novels, several of them purpose stories aimed to arouse sentiment against various social wrongs. Of these, *It is Never too Late to Mend* (1856), *Hard Cash* (1863), and *Put Yourself in his Place* (1870) are best known. His one historical romance, dealing with the early stage of the Reformation period in Germany, *The Cloister and the Hearth*, belongs with the masterpieces of its class.

Charles Kingsley, 1819-75.

Charles Kingsley, an English clergyman, published in 1849 two earnest books which exerted a marked influence upon the thought of the time. These were *Alton Locke*, descriptive of life in the London workshops, and *Yeast*, a study of conditions among the agricultural laborers. In 1853 appeared *Hypatia*, a fascinating narrative of the conflict between Christianity and Greek philosophy at Alexandria, about the beginning of the fifth century. His purely historical romances, *Westward Ho!* (1855) and *Hereward the Wake* (1866), are vigorous and brilliant pictures of English life in the age of Elizabeth and the period of the Norman Conquest. In 1860 Kingsley had been made Professor of Modern History at the University of Cambridge.

In 1873 he was appointed Canon of Westminster and Chaplain to the Queen.

George Meredith, 1828-1909

George Meredith was born at Portsmouth, of obscure parentage. Like Dickens, he was a journalist when he wrote his first story. Although *The Ordeal of Richard Feverel*, one of his best works, appeared in 1859, it was not until the publication of *Diana of the Crossways* (1885) that Meredith's position among the greater English novelists was generally recognized; and even this belated recognition did not bring the appreciation of universal popularity. Meredith's audience will always remain comparatively small. His method is too scientific; his style, though witty and brilliant, is whimsical and often obscure. He is a realist and a psychologist. It is the inner life of men and women that he seeks to interpret. Of his thirteen novels, *Harry Richmond* (1871), *Beauchamp's Career* (1876), and *The Egoist* (1879), together with the two already mentioned, represent George Meredith at his best.

Robert Louis Stevenson, 1845-94.

Robert Louis Stevenson was the herald of a vigorous reaction from the methods of realistic fiction and of a return to romance. In *Treasure Island* (1883), he revived the romance of pure adventure; in *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (1886), the romance of the mysterious and the weird; in *St. Ives* (unfinished), the romance of history. *Kidnapped* (1886), *The Master of Ballantrae* (1889), and *David Balfour* (1893) are narratives of adventure. All of Stevenson's works are distinguished by a style remarkable for its grace and strength. In a last, uncompleted novel, *Weir of Hermiston*, Stevenson left a work which contained the promise of as great character creation as has ever been seen in English fiction.

VII. THE VICTORIAN POETS: BROWNING, TENNYSON.

The Literary Field.

When Victoria came to the throne of England in 1837, the second generation of nineteeth century writers was in full possession of the stage; the majority of those who had won their laurels during the early years of the century had passed away, and only a few of those who were destined to make its closing years memorable in literary history had as yet found a place upon the scene. Byron, Scott, Shelley, Keats, Coleridge, Lamb — all were dead. Wordsworth still survived, the period of his inspiration gone; in 1837 he made the tour of Italy, of which he wrote *Memorials* after his return. Thomas De Quincey, in his fifty-second year, was living his eccentric life in Edinburgh; he published *The Revolt of the Tartars* in 1837. It was the year in which Macaulay, then in India, sent his essay on *Bacon* to the *Edinburgh Review*, and also the year in which Carlyle finished his great work upon *The French Revolution* and began his first course of public lectures in London. Bulwer was enjoying the fame brought by the publication of *The Last Days of Pompeii* (1834) and *Rienzi* (1835). Dickens finished *Pickwick Papers* in 1837 and began *Oliver Twist* in that same year. Thackeray was industriously cultivating journalism, writing for *The Times*, contributing *The Yellowplush Papers* to *Fraser's Magazine*, and supplying comic sketches for Cruikshank's *Almanack*. It was John Ruskin's first year of University residence; he was making himself a master of the pencil, and writing articles upon *The Poetry of Architecture* for technical magazines. Mary Ann Evans, just out of school, was keeping house on her father's farm, widening her acquaintance with books, and strongly evangelical in her religious be-

liefs. In 1837 Matthew Arnold, fifteen years of age, entered Rugby School. Of the new poets, Browning had published *Paracelsus* in 1835; Tennyson had already sent forth his second volume (1832), including *The Miller's Daughter*, *The Lotos-Eaters*, *The Palace of Art*, and *The Lady of Shalott* — he was now quietly perfecting his art and preparing for his next public appearance in 1842; William Morris was three years old; and 1837 was the year of Swinburne's birth.

The literature of the Victorian age compares favorably with that of any other epoch in English history. Essayists, historians, scientists, novelists, and poets have together contributed to the glory of its record. In the drama alone has creative genius been conspicuously weak; but here the deficiency has, perhaps, been more than met by the remarkable development in English fiction. The work of the great prose writers of this era has been covered in our survey; it remains only to speak of the great Victorian poets, at whose head stand Robert Browning and Alfred Tennyson.

Robert Browning, 1812–89.

Robert Browning was born in London May 7, 1812. His father, a clerk in the Bank of England for fifty years, was a man of taste in letters and art, and fostered this taste in his son. The poet's mother, a woman of deeply religious nature, was also a person of artistic temperament and fond of poetry. She was a romanticist; the father a disciple of Pope.

Childhood.

From the first Robert Browning was keenly susceptible to the influence of music, and a reminiscence of the poet's childhood presents him to us a little white-robed figure indistinctly outlined in the dusk, stealing from his bed to listen to his mother who was playing in the twilight; startled by the rus-

tling behind her she stopped, and the next moment the child leaped into her arms, sobbing passionately and whispering, "Play! Play!" [1] At eight, under his father's direction, he read Pope's *Homer* with delight; but he soon yielded to the fascination of Byron's romantic verse, and when his mother brought him copies of Shelley and Keats, he entered a new world of song; then his true poetic development began.

Browning's education was gained in a private school and at the University College, London, then just established. He entered in 1829, the year in which the college opened; but here he remained only for a term or two. He had, like other poets, courted the muse in much youthful verse; and while a schoolboy at Peckham, was fond of dreaming away the summer afternoons in an unfrequented spot by three huge elms, whence he had a view of London — the sight of which powerfully stirred his imagination. Once he found his way to the place at night, and the ruddy glare of the city lamps, glowing above the blackness, with the audible murmur of its distant streets, aroused in his mind first ideas of the tragic significance of life. We know little else of his school days. He was studious, contemplative, and retired.

The Definite Plan.

When Browning was about twenty years old, he planned a series of epic narratives which should depict the development of typical souls. He set himself to the study of the soul life. This determination gives us the key to his career; the internal drama of the mind is the theme of his verse; it is this which distinguishes him among poets as the

"Subtlest assertor of the soul in song." [2]

[1] See Sharpe's *Life of Robert Browning*, ch. i.

[2] The title given Browning by his friend Alfred Domett, the hero of the poem *Waring*.

In pursuance of his plan Browning completed, in 1832, his first important poem, *Pauline*, which was published through the generosity of an aunt the following year. The poem is a confession of a youth — a poet and a student — whose life, in spite of dreams of usefulness, has been misspent. Pauline is the name of the lady who edits it.

> "So I will sing on — fast as fancies come,
> Rudely — the verse being as the mood it paints.
> . . . . . .
> I am made up of an intensest life.
> I strip my mind bare, whose first elements
> I shall unveil. . . .
> And then I shall show how these elements
> Produced my present state, and what it is."

The poem was crude, obscure, and scarcely understood; but both its matter and its manner were significant of the poet's programme, and this programme he followed to the last.

Paracelsus and Sordello.

In 1833 Browning traveled in Europe, visiting Russia and Italy. During 1834–35 he composed the long dramatic poem *Paracelsus*. It was a wonderful production for a youth of twenty-two.

"I go to prove my soul!" the hero cries;

> "I see my way as birds their trackless way.
> I shall arrive! what time, what circuit first,
> I ask not: but unless God send His hail
> Or blinding fire-balls, sleet or stifling snow,
> In some time, His good time, I shall arrive;
> He guides me and the bird. In His good time."

The general theme of the poem may, perhaps, be suggested by the headings of its sections: Paracelsus aspires; Paracelsus attains; Paracelsus; Paracelsus aspires; Paracelsus attains. There are many imperfections in the poem and many beauties. It won the poet some notable friends.

Browning was already at work upon another poem, but set that work aside at the request of the celebrated actor, Macready, for a play. In May, 1837, the drama of *Strafford* was completed and presented at the Covent Garden Theatre. It proved only a partial success. The great philosophical poem *Sordello*, thus interrupted, was not finished until 1840. It was another "soul" poem, the author's most ambitious effort. It was much longer than *Paracelsus*, more profound, and, alas, much more obscure. Several amusing anecdotes are told of those who attempted in vain to understand it. Carlyle declared that his wife had read the poem through without being able to decide whether Sordello was a man, a city, or a book. Tennyson affirmed that only two lines did he understand — and they were both lies: these were the opening, —

"Who will may hear Sordello's story told, —

and the closing, —

"Who would has heard Sordello's story told."

Between the years 1840 and 1870 Browning produced his best work. He had then emerged from the heaviness and abstruseness of the first period and wrote with a freshness and vigor of style that gave intense dramatic interest to the expression of profoundest thought. In 1841 was published *Pippa Passes*, a genuine masterpiece of creative power. The story of the poem is an episode in the life of Felippa, or Pippa, a little silk-winder from the factory in Asolo, an Italian town in the Trevisan. Upon her birthday, which is New Year's Day, Pippa spends her unwonted leisure wishing she might do some small service in the world. She allows her childish imagination to participate in the happiness of certain prominent personages who are in the town — the happiest of all

The Second Period.

in Asolo: Ottima, illicitly beloved by Sebald; Luigi, the idol of his mother; Phené, that day to become the bride of the young artist Jules; and Monsignor, who is to arrive from Rome, whose happiness must be the greatest of all, because his is a spiritual affection, the sacred passion of the Holy Church. Thus Pippa passes through the city, singing her blithe song: —

> "God 's in his heaven —
> All 's right with the world!"

until, unconsciously, she becomes a saving element in the soul struggle of each of these great people and the instrument of consequences momentous to herself.

Pippa Passes was published as the first of a series of volumes, eight in all, which appeared at intervals from 1841 to 1846, under the general title *Bells and Pomegranates*. The series included the *Dramatic Lyrics* (1842), the *Dramatic Romances and Lyrics* (1845), and five of Browning's poetical dramas, of which *A Blot in the 'Scutcheon* (1843) and *Colombe's Birthday* (1844), are the best known.

In 1846 the poet was married to Elizabeth Barrett.

Elizabeth Barrett.

This gifted woman had already published two or three volumes of song which had won ready recognition by their worth. She was an invalid for many years, and at the time when her acquaintance with Robert Browning began had, apparently, not long to live. Her father, a man of obstinate and violent temper, opposed the friendship strenuously; but four months after their first meeting, the two poets were quietly married and slipped away to Italy, where they continued to reside until Mrs. Browning's death in 1861. The married life of the Brownings was ideally happy. Each was an inspiration to the other; and in the new environment of love and happiness, health and life came back to the invalid.

"I yield the grave for thy sake, and exchange
My near sweet view of heaven for earth with thee,"

she wrote in one of her *Sonnets from the Portuguese*, — love poems written in their home at Pisa and, under the disguise of a purely fanciful title, dedicated to her husband. They afterward removed to Florence, where Mrs. Browning wrote *Casa Guidi Windows* and *Aurora Leigh*. In 1849 their son, Robert, was born; and in the same year Browning's *Poetical Works* were published in two volumes. In 1853–54 the Brownings passed the winter in Rome. Here were written the poems published in the following year under the title *Men and Women*, including *Fra Lippo Lippi*, *The Epistle of Karshish*, and the completed version of *Saul*. The volume was dedicated in a beautiful introductory lyric, *One Word More*, to the poet's wife. In the spring of the next year Mrs. Browning presented her husband with the first six books of *Aurora Leigh*.

During the five years following Mrs. Browning's death in 1861, Robert Browning wrote comparatively little; yet to this period belong some of the most notable among his shorter poems: *James Lee's Wife*, *Abt Vogler*, *A Death in the Desert*, *Rabbi Ben Ezra*, and *Prospice*. In 1868–69 appeared the poet's real masterpiece, *The Ring and the Book*. This extraordinary work, consisting of some 20,000 lines, longer than the *Iliad* and twice as long as *Paradise Lost*, contains the dramatic recital of a brutal crime, — Count Guido Franceschini's murder of his wife. Out of this unpromising material Browning has constructed a fascinating and impressive study in character; it is a drama of the consequences of an act, and its effect on the soul. The story of the crime is told by nine different persons, including the murderer, his victim (who makes an ante-mortem statement), a

The Ring and the Book.

young priest (who has been the friend of the wife), the public prosecutor, the advocate, and the pope (to whom appeal is made). The significance of the title is explained by its symbolism. A goldsmith in making a ring mixes alloy with the pure metal, so that the gold can be modeled by art; when the ring is made, the alloy is removed by acid. The book referred to is the yellow-colored text of evidence submitted in the trial of Count Guido at Rome in 1698. It contains the truth of circumstantial fact. Now the poet will take his material thus discovered, mix fancy with the fact, and beat out in his own way the finer truth which his artist's eye discerns —

> "Because it is the glory and the good of Art,
> That Art remains the one way possible
> Of speaking truth."

Later Life. Full with the vivacity and cheeriness of a vigorous physique, Browning passed the later years of his life partly in Venice, partly in London; he never returned to Florence after Mrs. Browning's death. He was fond of company; he continued active in brain and body to the end. Of the fourteen volumes of verse published between 1870 and 1890, it is not necessary to speak in detail. His best poetry belongs to the middle period of his life. Always philosophical, his philosophy became more abstruse, his expression more eccentric in the later works. But the magnificent virility of his style, and the triumphant optimism of his healthy soul, characterized his poetry to the end. He died in Venice December 12, 1889, and his body was finally laid in Westminster Abbey.

Suggestions for Study. Of all the poets, Browning most demands a guide. It has so long been the custom to magnify the "obscurity" of Browning's poetry that much injustice has been done both the poet and the possible reader of his

work; at the same time, for one beginning to read Browning, some direction is almost essential. An especially useful guide is *An Introduction to the Study of Robert Browning's Poetry*, by Hiram Corson (Heath). Let the student read the introductory essays, particularly that upon "Browning's Obscurity," and then follow the order of the selected poems which Professor Corson includes. When the structure of the *dramatic monologue* is once understood, he will have no great difficulty in comprehending the poet. If one does not have Professor Corson's *Introduction*, he would best begin with the *Dramatic Romances and Lyrics*, taking the familiar *How they Brought the Good News from Ghent*, *Home Thoughts*, *The Boy and the Angel*, *The Glove*, *The Lost Leader;* then *The Flight of the Duchess*, *The Italian in England*, and *The Englishman in Italy*. Then let him take the volume of *Men and Women* and read the two great "artist" poems, *Fra Lippo Lippi* and *Andrea del Sarto*. These are both monologues, the principal person in each poem speaking throughout, but indicating by his expression the presence of one or more auditors who really enter into the conversation and action of the piece. The first is a study of one of the early realists among the Italian painters, — the Carmelite monk, shut up by his patron, Cosimo de' Medici, and breaking out of bounds for an evening's amusement on the streets. He has been picked up by the watch and speaks, as a captive, to the officer in command. He tells the story of his rather sorry life and discourses significantly upon his art. The pith of the poem is in lines 283–315. The doctrine expressed in

> "This world 's no blot for us,
> Nor blank; it means intensely, and means good,"

is one often reiterated by the poet. *Andrea del Sarto*, one of the most delicate characterizations produced by Browning, is in a sense antithetical to the other poem. It is a quiet, sombre, "twilight" piece. Andrea, "the faultless painter," has reached the full measure of his attainment and recognizes his failure to reach the highest promise of his art;

he never will equal Angelo or Raphael, because his soul has ceased to grow; his weak moral purpose, his infatuation with the faithless, soul-less Lucrezia, have robbed him of the consummation that might have crowned his effort; and he is wishing that things should be as they are. He also interprets his own career: —

> "Ah, but a man's reach should exceed his grasp,
> Or what's a heaven for?"

In both these poems Browning exhibits a distinct acquaintance with the technique of painting, a thorough knowledge of the time concerned, as well as profound insight into human character. *The Bishop Orders his Tomb at Saint Praxed's* is a study of the worldliness, inconsistency, and pride, common enough in the period of the Italian Renascence, revealed in the character of this hypocritical, luxurious old man, whose ruling passions are still strong in death. The *Epistle of Karshish, the Arab Physician* is one of the poet's masterpieces; note the delicate touch in details which suggest the local color and atmosphere. Karshish, in his journey, has met a most wonderful case; the man claims to have been recovered from the dead, and his singular behavior, his apathy and his enthusiasms, have so wrought upon the mind of Karshish that he must needs write his master all about it; he is half ashamed of the impression made upon him, and seemingly avoids the real purpose of his letter until it bursts forth in a climax of remarkable power. Aside from the skill with which the entire theme is developed, the careful study of the attitude of Lazarus — one called again from the dead — is to be noted. Among Browning's distinctively religious subjects, the treatment of the theme in *Saul* is the most notable; poetic inspiration has never produced anything more impressive than this conception of Hebrew character in the shepherd boy David, his relation to the great first king, and his outburst of prophetic song. In the study of this masterpiece note the various details that give realism to the setting as regards scenery and national characteristics; then follow the sequence of events: what is the first effect of

David's singing, and what song produces that effect? Distinguish the themes of all the songs — the effect of each upon Saul. Study the nature of the climax in section 18. What purpose is served in the conclusion, section 19? Compare with this poem the one entitled *A Death in the Desert*. Read next some of the poems in *Dramatis Personæ: Abt Vogler*, the musician's poem, and *Rabbi Ben Ezra*, the embodiment of much of Browning's philosophy concerning life. Note the strong optimistic expression in all these poems. Bring together some of the clear, forceful statements of that philosophy, such as: —

"The best is yet to be."

"What I aspired to be
And was not, comforts me."

"Perfect I call Thy plan:
Thanks that I was a man!"

"All good things
Are ours, nor soul helps flesh more, now, than flesh helps soul!"

"There shall never be one lost good!"

etc. Find similar sentiments in *Saul* and note them in the reading of other poems. Weigh each stanza of *Rabbi Ben Ezra:* what is the direct teaching of stanzas 22, 23, 24?

Having read the poems named, and others in these volumes, take up *Pippa Passes;* then read one or two sections of *The Ring and the Book*, if interest and appreciation grow. This last work should not be made a task; unless its peculiarities of structure and manner are thoroughly enjoyed, do not attempt it; it may be best read, if undertaken leisurely, as an entire winter's course. There is a fine edition, illustrated from photographs, edited by Charlotte Porter and Helen A. Clarke (Crowell). *Paracelsus* and *Sordello* should not be read until one finds oneself thoroughly in touch with the poet and anxious to extend the acquaintance; but any one may safely look for the superb song in *Paracelsus*, "Over the sea our galleys went." In all reading of Browning, note the strong virility of expression, the

intensity of thought and passion, the insight into character, the hearty sympathy with life, the prominence given to soul conflicts, the vigorous dramatic sense, and the truly wonderful scope and variety shown in the selection of material. How many different races are represented among Browning's characters?

Brief Bibliography. The most convenient short life of Browning is that by William Sharp, in the *Great Writers Series*. The *Browning* in the *English Men of Letters Series* is by G. K. Chesterton. There is an extended biography by Mrs. Sutherland Orr (Houghton, Mifflin and Company), also a *Handbook to the Works of Browning*, by the same author. The *Introduction* by Hiram Corson (Heath) has been already mentioned as indispensable to the beginner. There are other introductions, numerous commentaries, and essays beyond number. Reference to E. C. Stedman's *Victorian Poets* is recommended. The vivacious essay by Augustine Birrell in *Obiter Dicta, On the Alleged Obscurity of Mr. Browning's Poetry*, will be found somewhat reassuring by those who are in difficulty. The Cambridge Edition of Browning's *Complete Poetic and Dramatic Works* (Houghton, Mifflin and Company) is the best edition for students' use. The same house publishes also the Riverside Edition in six volumes. Number 115 of the *Riverside Literature Series* contains selected short poems.

Alfred Tennyson, 1809-92. The real representative poet of the Victorian era, "England's voice" through half a century, was Alfred Tennyson. He was in many ways a striking contrast to his brother poet Browning. Closely identified with what pertains to England, his interests were absorbed in her history, her people, her national development, and her fame. English thought is mirrored in his poetry. He kept abreast with the scientific movements of the century, was intensely interested in the discoveries and speculations of Darwin,[1] Tyndall, Huxley, and Spencer, was attracted

[1] Charles Robert Darwin (1809–82), the greatest among this group

by the doctrine of evolution, but firm in his faith and insistent in exalting the spiritual above the material. A conservative in matters of religion and politics, he ever upheld the cardinal principle of law. His verse is the embodiment of finished art, sweet, melodious, and transparently clear.

Tennyson was born in the little village of Somersby in Lincolnshire, where his father was the rector. In the *Ode to Memory* the poet gives us glimpses of his early home: — Birth and Early Life.

> "The seven elms, the poplars four,
> That stand beside my father's door.
> . . . . the brook that loves
> To purl o'er matted cress and ribbed sand
> Or dimple in the dark of rushy coves.
> . . . . a sand-built ridge
> Of heaped hills that mound the sea,
> Overblown with murmurs harsh,
> Or even a lowly cottage whence we see
> Stretch'd wide and wild the waste enormous marsh."

There were twelve children in Somersby rectory, and the place has been compared to a nest of song birds; two of Tennyson's brothers were poets and would have been better known, perhaps, if their talents had not been eclipsed by the genius of Alfred.[1] In 1827 a little anonymous volume appeared, containing *Poems by Two Brothers;* these were by Charles and Alfred Tennyson, Alfred being then about eighteen. The poems were largely imitative, but showed variety and promise. Byron was naturally the idol of youthful versifiers in that day, and Tennyson did not escape the influence.

> "I wander in darkness and sorrow
> Unfriended and cold and alone,"

of scientific scholars, was born in the same year as Tennyson. His great work, *On the Origin of Species*, appeared in 1859; his *Descent of Man* in 1871.

[1] Frederick Tennyson (died 1891) published three volumes of verse; Charles Turner (died 1879) published five.

he exclaims with genuine Byronic flavor in a boyish composition; when Byron died he wrote a poem upon the event and carved the words "Byron is dead" upon a sandstone cliff near the house.

The Early Volumes.

Tennyson studied in the grammar school at Louth and spent about two years at Trinity College, Cambridge, his father's death in 1831 compelling his withdrawal from the University. While at Cambridge he won the Chancellor's medal with his prize poem *Timbuctoo*, and also published his first volume, fifty-three poems in all — for the most part mere metrical exercises and studies in poetical effect; but there were a few compositions of notable power. In one he describes the Poet —

> 'Dower'd with the hate of hate, the scorn of scorn,
> The love of love."

In another he discourses upon *The Poet's Mind*. There was one particularly striking composition entitled *The Deserted House*. It is a picture of death, remarkably free from any morbid suggestions, full of quiet power and calm restraint. But there was also an unfortunate production upon *The Owl*, and this particular effusion, with its tuwhits and tuwhoos, furnished a congenial text for a sledgehammer article in the *Edinburgh Review* by Christopher North, who always wrote with the vim of a blacksmith on occasions of this sort.

> "Alfred himself is the greatest owl," he asserted; "all he wants is to be shot and stuffed, and stuck in a glass case, to be made immortal — in a museum."

Nevertheless, in 1832 there appeared a new volume of *Poems by Alfred Tennyson*, among them some of rare beauty, ever to be linked with the poet's fame. Here were *The Miller's Daughter*, *Œnone*, *The Lotos-*

Eaters, *The Palace of Art*, *A Dream of Fair Women*, and *The Lady of Shalott*. There was great variety as well as unusual richness in the poetry here presented. "All in all," says Stedman, "a more original and beautiful volume of poetry was never added to our literature." [1]

Still the contemporary reviews were unsympathetic and severe. Lockhart, in the *Quarterly*, ridiculed the poet, but at the same time indicated some of the real weaknesses of the verse. For the next decade Tennyson devoted himself to the careful revision of his poems and the conscientious study of his art. It was not until 1842 that he again published; but with the appearance of the two volumes in that year, Tennyson found his place; from that time on he was recognized as the foremost poet of his age.

In 1847 appeared *The Princess*, a poem of exquisite beauty, but difficult to appreciate unless one notes the significance of its sub-title, — *A Medley*. Here is indeed a combination of the humorous and serious, an odd mingling of the heroic with the burlesque. The poem begins with a picturesque description of the festival at Sir Walter Vivian's. Stories of old ancestors and their heroic deeds are read and told. At last the daughter, Lilia, vigorously champions woman's cause, declaring that were she some great princess she would build for women, **The Princess.**

> "Far off from men a college like a man's,
> And I would teach them all that men are taught."

Then comes the proposition to tell a seven-fold tale: —

> "'Take Lilia, then, for heroine,' clamors one,
> 'And make her some great princess, six feet high,
> Grand, epic, homicidal!'"

And the epic of *The Princess* follows.

[1] Edmund Clarence Stedman, *Victorian Poets*.

The poem is full of beauties; apt phrases and striking images multiply in profuse succession. Tennyson's remarkable gift in the choice of suggestive words is nowhere better displayed than in passages like these: —

> "The broad ambrosial aisles of lofty lime
> Made noise with bees and breeze from end to end."

> "To them the doors gave way
> Groaning, and in the vestal entry shrieked
> The virgin marble under iron heels;"

in phrases like "oily courtesies," "lucid marbles," "lapt in the arms of leisure," "the tinsel clink of compliment," "the rotten pales of prejudice," "the fading politics of mortal Rome."

A later edition of *The Princess* was further enriched with the songs which form the interludes, and emphasize the fact that the real heroine of the epic is the Child. The serious purpose of the poem is found in Part VII., lines 243–279: —

> "The woman's cause is man's; they rise or sink
> Together. . . .
> For woman is not undeveloped man,
> But diverse; could we make her as the man,
> Sweet Love were slain; his dearest bond is this,
> Not like to like, but like in difference.
> Yet in the long years liker must they grow;
> The man be more of woman, she of man."

The Year 1850.

The year that marked the middle of the century was a year of supreme importance in Tennyson's career. It was the year in which the poet married Emily Sellwood.

> "Her whose gentle will has changed my fate
> And made my life a perfumed altar-flame."

They had met thirteen years before; but up to this time family circumstances had prevented the poet from establishing a home. In 1850 the poet-laureate, Wordsworth, died; and in this year the honor was

conferred upon Tennyson. It was in 1850 also that the poet published *In Memoriam*, by many regarded as his greatest work.

This noble composition is an elegiac poem, or rather series of poems. The story it tells is one of private grief in the loss of a personal friend; but in the development of his theme the poet fits his application to the universal experience of human sorrow: his grief is but a part of the common woe. The note of sincerity rings through it all; there is no false assumption of feeling, no empty sermonizing. The dejection, the hopeless abandonment to grief, the hesitant groping after light, the weakness of the dawning faith, the insistency of doubt, the beneficence of action, the brave philosophy of optimism, the logic of love, the instinctive confidence in the immortality of life — these are phases in the experience of all humanity; never have they been more sympathetically and less obtrusively expressed. The poet himself declared, "It is rather the cry of the whole human race than mine." "It is a very impersonal poem as well as personal." This obvious universality of *In Memoriam* is its most impressive feature; and this is why to many thousands it has been in time of bereavement the one great poem to which they have turned for sympathy and relief. In Memoriam.

The immediate occasion of its composition was the death of Tennyson's intimate friend, a fellow student with the poet at Cambridge, Arthur Henry Hallam.[1] He died at Vienna in 1833. It will be seen that a long interval elapsed before *In Memoriam* appeared. The poem was the carefully considered product of these intervening years.

[1] Concerning the character of Hallam, a young man of remarkable gifts, see the account by Mr. Gladstone, reprinted in pamphlet from *The Youth's Companion* (Perry Mason and Company).

In reading *In Memoriam*, we need not expect to find a deliberate system of philosophy elaborately set forth. The philosophy is there, but it is expressed as the poet usually expresses what he deems the truth: in gleams or bursts of lyric feeling, as a seer describes the panorama of his vision. It is not fitting that the poet should educe an argument — that is preliminary; he produces not harmonies but a harmony. The spiritual experience thus related covers a period of some three years, the advent of three successive Christmas seasons serving as tide-marks in the ebb and flow of the poet's faith in

> "That God, which ever lives and loves,
> One God, one law, one element,
> And one far-off divine event,
> To which the whole creation moves."

The Poet-Laureate.

Poetry is a product of something more than official inspiration. We do not look to the various royal greetings or national memorials, usually, to find the best work of the laureate. Yet Tennyson's occasional pieces of this order are not unworthy compositions. The two addresses *To the Queen* are sincere and earnest poems. The splendid *Ode on the Death of the Duke of Wellington* has something of an official tone, and this is one of the poet's finest productions. This *Ode* was first published on the morning of the great duke's funeral, September 14, 1852, and was at first almost universally depreciated. It was afterward added to, and its true merit was recognized. It was one of Tennyson's own favorites.[1] The poem *Maud* (1855), inspired by the event of the Crimean War, was received in much the same fashion.

[1] "Up to the time of my father's death, when his friends asked him to read aloud from his own poetry, he generally chose *Maud*, the *Ode on the Death of the Duke of Wellington*, or *Guinevere*." — Hallam Tennyson, in the biography of his father, vol. i., page 385.

The romantic material found in the legends of King Arthur, and connected with the quest of the Holy Grail, fascinated Tennyson, as it had Spenser and Milton[1] and many poets of lesser rank. There had been indications of this interest in several early poems — *The Lady of Shalott* (1832), *Sir Galahad, Sir Launcelot and Queen Guinevere*, and *Morte d'Arthur* (1842) — before the laureate actually began upon the wonderful series of epic romances that comprise the *Idylls of the King*. There was no established order in their production. *Enid*, *Vivien*, *Elaine*, and *Guinevere* appeared in 1859; *The Holy Grail*, *The Coming of Arthur*, *Pelleas and Ettarre*, *The Passing of Arthur* in 1869. *The Last Tournament* was not published until 1871; *Gareth and Lynette* the year after. Nor is there any definite sequence in the exquisite pageantry of these idylls, other than the natural chronology of the events involved. Various estimates have been placed upon the work; but this glorious idealization of the great legendary king, these impressive pictures of a chivalrous order disorganized and shattered by the subtle effects of secret guilt, will remain for most readers an intensely interesting and effective creation, one of the world romances in verse. The Idylls of the King.

Tennyson does not rank among the great dramatic poets; in power of individual characterization he is far inferior to Browning; at the same time his experiments in this field are by no means failures. Three ambitious historical dramas, *Queen Mary* (1875), *Harold* (1876), and *Becket* (1884), represent his worthiest attempts. Two of these plays have been produced, and the last named, *Becket*, has, in the hands of Sir Henry Irving, met with no small degree of success. It is, however, best appreciated as a reading The Dramas.

[1] See page 185.

play. A lighter drama, *The Foresters*, was first presented in 1892. It added nothing to its author's fame.

The Close of Tennyson's Career.

Between 1880 and 1890 several volumes of poetry were published, but Tennyson's best work had been produced. The poet varied his residence between his beautiful estate at Farringford in the Isle of Wight and at Aldworth in Surrey, where he had established a summer and autumn home. In 1884 he accepted a peerage with the title of Baron Tennyson of Aldworth, Surrey, and Freshwater, Isle of Wight. He continued deeply interested in all public questions of national concern, was a strong Conservative in politics, but believed profoundly in the expansion of British power and the promotion of England's glory. Something of his old-time vigor was shown in *Demeter and Other Poems*, the last collection of poems published before his death; and one beautiful lyric, *Crossing the Bar*, came like the fabled swan-song, the poet's final utterance of hope and trust.

"Twilight and evening bell,
And after that the dark!
And may there be no sadness of farewell,
When I embark;

"For tho' from out our bourne of Time and Place
The flood may bear me far,
I hope to see my Pilot face to face
When I have crossed the bar."[1]

Tennyson died at Aldworth October 6, 1892. His family was about him. It was evening; there was no light but that of the full harvest moon which filled the room. Upon his bed the volume of Shakespeare, from

[1] This poem, suggested to the poet while crossing the Solent from the Isle of Wight, was designated by Tennyson as the one which he wished to appear at the end of the volume containing his completed work.

which he had been reading, still lay open at the dirge in *Cymbeline*, —

> "Fear no more the heat o' the sun,
> Nor the furious winter's rages;
> Thou thy worldly task hast done,
> Home art gone, and ta'en thy wages.
> . . . . . .
> Quiet consummation have;
> And renownèd be thy grave!"

Thus was the passing of our last great English poet; his finished work in its entirety the choicest gift to permanent literature that the century had to offer in its close.

Suggestions for Study.

In reading the poetry of Tennyson, its essentially English character is felt. Its source and inspiration is national. Compare the titles in the index of his poems with the titles of Browning's poems, or those of Byron and Shelley, or any other nineteenth century poet; only Wordsworth is comparable with Tennyson in this respect. The poems suggestive of classic sources — *Œnone*, *Ulysses*, *Tithonus*, *Tiresias*, *Demeter*, *Persephone*, *Lucretius*, — may well be studied in their group, with reference to their classical quality. That Tennyson was not unsusceptible to the influence of Theocritus and Vergil is abundantly proved by the numerous allusions to those poets hidden in his verse (compare the article by Maurice Thompson in *The Independent*, November 17, 1898, and that by W. P. Mustard in *The American Journal of Philology*, April, May, and June, 1899). There is much in Tennyson that reminds us of Keats, much to suggest the manner of Wordsworth. Note a few of these echoes in *The Day-Dream*, *Amphion*, *Walking to the Mail*, *The Talking Oak*, *The Golden Year*, and *Edward Gray*. Of that beautiful pastoral masterpiece, *Dora*, Wordsworth himself said: "Mr. Tennyson, I have been endeavoring all my life to write a pastoral like your *Dora*, and have not succeeded."[1] But these resemblances are only echoes; the style is truly Tennysonian.

[1] *Life of Alfred, Lord Tennyson*, by his son, vol. i., p. 265.

Attitude toward Nature.

Alfred Tennyson was not a nature poet — certainly not a worshiper of nature like Wordsworth; nor was he the interpreter of nature, adopting the conventional tone of poets like Scott, Byron, and Shelley. To him there was nothing mystical or transcendental in nature. She had her mystery to him as to us all; he frankly admitted that; his fancy, his imagination, did not seek to fathom it.

> "Flower in the crannied wall,
> I pluck you out of your crannies,
> I hold you here, root and all, in my hand,
> Little flower — but if I could understand
> What you are, root and all, and all in all,
> I should know what God and man is."

These six lines express practically Tennyson's nature creed. In this connection read the lines *On a Mourner* and *The Higher Pantheism.* He has no explanation of the life which informs; he leaves the mystery a riddle, he confesses that he does *not* understand. The supernatural element in nature Tennyson has no power to reveal. Yet we are not to suppose that for him nature had no charm. Not even Wordsworth was more keenly alive to her beauty or her power. All her forms and varying phases impressed him profoundly: bright colors, play of light and shade, the passing cloud, the gathering storm, the rise and set of sun, the change of season, the silence of the woods, the blossoming of flowers, the ripening wheat, the song and flight of birds, the restless beating of the sea — these all impressed him, but always in relation to human interests, not of or for themselves alone. His invocation to "divinest memory," with its Miltonic echoes, an early piece, may be read as one of the simplest illustrations of this point. This *Ode to Memory* pictures the surroundings of the Lincolnshire birthplace. It is rather as a *student of nature* that Tennyson writes in his maturer poems, whether in descriptive passages or in the numerous allusions to natural phenomena with which his compositions are abundantly adorned. While still a boy he was a keen observer of the habits of birds and beasts and

ants and bees. At one time he kept a tame snake in his room; he liked to watch its wonderful sinuosities upon the carpet. In one of his private letters he tells a friend of the interest he took in examining the embryos of two little snakes "with bolting eyes and beating hearts," and wished he had had a microscope to study them more minutely. The poet was a watcher of the heavens and had had a platform built on the house roof at Farringford, which was a favorite resort for him at night. In 1857 Bayard Taylor visited the poet and subsequently described a walk with Tennyson across the island. Taylor says: "During the conversation with which we beguiled the way, I was struck with the variety of his knowledge. Not a little flower on the downs which the sheep had spared escaped his notice, and the geology of the coast, both terrestrial and submarine, was perfectly familiar to him." At one time the poet began the compilation of a flower dictionary. He bought spy-glasses, with which to watch the movements of birds in the ilexes, cedar and fir trees. Geology he studied in earnest and trudged on many an expedition of discovery with the local geologist at Farringford. In the beauty of nature he took genuine delight. He would walk any distance to see a bubbling brook or a tree of unusual stateliness or growth. Sometimes Tennyson was moved by the spirit of nature within him to go forth from the haunts of men. In 1848 he felt a craving to make a lonely sojourn at Bude. "I hear," he said, "that there are larger waves there than on any other part of the British coast, and must go thither and be alone with God." He was ever more profoundly influenced by the sea than by any other of nature's manifestations. Features in the landscape that impressed him, and the phenomena observed by him, were often reproduced in his poetry. His son records a number of interesting illustrations of this fact in the biography of his father. Thus in the fine passage in *Lancelot and Elaine* beginning

"They couched their spears and pricked their steeds," etc.,

the poet introduces a simile as follows: —

> "as a wild wave in the wide North-sea
> Green-glimmering toward the summit, bears with all
> Its stormy crests that smoke against the skies,
> Down on a bark," etc.

This comparison was suggested by an experience during a trip to Norway in 1858, described in his journal thus in part: "One great wave, *green shining*, past with all *its crests smoking* high up beside the vessel." The line in stanza iv. of *The Daisy* —

> "By bays, the peacock's neck in hue" —

was similarly suggested during a walk in Cornwall: "Walked seaward. Large crimson clover; sea purple and green, *like a peacock's neck.*"

Descriptive passages should be studied in some detail. Take the introduction to *Enoch Arden:* note the details in the first nine lines; sketch or diagram the picture. Compare the descriptions in *The Dying Swan*, *The Lotos-Eaters*, *The Voyage of Maeldune*, *The Lady of Shalott*, *The Arabian Nights*, with those in *The Gardener's Daughter* and *The Miller's Daughter.* What difference do you note in these two groups — why should it be so? Make a special study of the nature similes and the descriptive passages in *The Princess*, noting especially the remarkable battle narrative near the close of section v. Compare with this last the battle scene in *Geraint and Enid.* There are some wonderful pictures of the sea scattered through the poems: read the description of the flood tide in *Sea Dreams.* It might be interesting to note what *birds* are introduced by Tennyson, and how they are described: "the cuckoo told his name to all the hills," the "redcap whistled," "the mellow ouzel fluted in the elm," "ring sudden scritches of the jay," "where hummed the dropping snipe," "The lark could scarce get out his notes for joy, But shook his song together," etc. What *flowers* grow most freely in Tennyson's garden? A characteristic allusion which shows the scientific accuracy of Tennyson's manner is found in the comparison (*The Princess*, v. 187) —

"Not a thought, a touch,
But pure as lines of green that streak the white
Of the first snowdrop's inner leaves."

Artistic Methods.

The technique of Tennyson should receive some attention from the student; no other English poet lends himself so readily to this study. Indeed, much concerning the *art* of poetry may be learned from the study of Tennyson's verse. The poet's strict and impartial criticism of his own productions had its natural result in many directions. Since Pope's, there has been no English verse so free from flaw. Of his songs, Tennyson himself thought the best to be: *In the Valley of Cauteretz*, *Courage*, *Poor Heart of Stone*, *Break*, *Break*, *Break*, *The Bugle Song* (*The Princess*), *Ask me no More* (*The Princess*), *Tears*, *Idle Tears* (*The Princess*), and *Crossing the Bar*. There are some particular lines to which Tennyson has called attention as particularly satisfactory to himself. He regarded this line as one of the best he had ever written: —

"Universal ocean softly washing all her warless isles."

For simple rhythm he regarded as most successful the verse: —

"Come down, O Maid, from yonder mountain height."

Take account of the consonantal sounds in this verse and note the effect of these m's and n's, these d's and t's. It is by the combination of sounds and rhythms that the poet gains his effects: the matter of consonants and vowels, therefore, is one of considerable significance in the mechanics of this art. Tennyson was exceedingly sensitive to the unpleasant sound of the letter s, when too much in evidence. Ridding the line of this disagreeable sibilation, he called "kicking the geese out of the boat." "I never put s's together in any verse of mine," he said; "my line is not as often quoted,

"And freedom broadens slowly down,"

but

"And freedom slowly broadens down."

He considered the close of his *Tiresias* to be the best of his

blank verses. Among his many beautiful similes he was most fond of that in *Locksley Hall*: —

Love took up the glass of Time, and turned it in his glowing hands,
Every movement, lightly shaken, ran itself in golden sands.
Love took up the harp of Life, and smote on all the chords with might;
Smote the chord of Self, that, trembling, pass'd in music out of sight."

The student may with advantage study these examples in their immediate connection and discover for himself similar effects in other passages.

In the selection of melodious words Tennyson was remarkably happy; many of his very early poems, in which occur the frequent repetitions of such rhymes as *shiver, quiver, river; low, mellow; ambrosial, carol; aweary, dreary; cheerly, clearly; lispeth, welleth, dwelleth, swelleth*, etc., are obvious experiments in the effect of sound. With a view to this quality of the verse, read *The Lady of Shalott*, *The Lotos-Eaters*, the *Ode on Wellington*, and such passages as are met in other poems. What quality in the words makes the verse so effective in the songs *The Splendor Falls* and *Sweet and Low* (*The Princess*), in the early *Song*, —

"The winds as at their hour of birth,"

and in such lines as these, in *Demeter*: —

"What sound was dearest in his native dells?
The mellow lin-lan-lone of evening bells,
Far-far-away."

Tennyson is a master of concise phrasing. A dreamer sees a tiny fleet of glass wrecked on a golden reef: —

"The little fleet
Touch'd, clink'd, and clash'd, and vanish'd."
(*Sea Dreams.*)

"He makes no friends who never made a foe."
"Then trust me not at all, or all in all."
"His honor rooted in dishonor stood,
And faith unfaithful kept him falsely true."
(*Lancelot and Elaine.*)

Imagery. The imagery of Tennyson's poetry is perfect. There is no straining of comparisons, no mixing of metaphors. The poet's perfected judgment was authoritative. Simple, pure, flawless, they may well be described

by that splendid figure of the laureate's own coinage, as

> "Jewels five-words-long
> That on the stretch'd forefinger of all Time
> Sparkle forever."
>
> (*The Princess*, ii. 351.)

Was there ever a comparison more faultless than this? —

> "Music that gentlier on the spirit lies
> Than tired eyelids upon tired eyes."
>
> (*The Lotos-Eaters.*)

The poet's name will be always associated with what is called the *In Memoriam* stanza, an arrangement skillfully used by him. This measure he thought to have been originated by himself, until told that it had been used both by Sir Philip Sidney and by Ben Jonson. It is admirably adapted to the purpose of the elegy. Tennyson employs great variety in metrical forms; but further than recognizing this variety and the special fitness to the theme of the various arrangements, it is hardly necessary for the student to go. It will be sufficient if he attains a clearer perception and more intelligent enjoyment of the broader yet delicate effects of rhythm and tone which constitute the real music of the poet's song.

Metre.

Of the dramas, the student would best take *Becket* for his study, noting the artistic effect of the Prologue, with its significant game of chess, the self-revelation of Henry's impulsive, irresponsible character, the strength of Eleanor, and the calm, conscientious, masterful spirit of Becket. Follow the development of the action, noting the special dramatic moments in Becket's career, such as the scene with Fitzurse, with Rosamund (Act I., scene 1), with the prelates (Act I., scene 3). the scene of Becket's temporary triumph (Act II., scene 2), the moment of his final resolve at the close of Act III. (the climax), and the murder of the archbishop in the cathedral (Act V., scene 3). Act IV., in which Eleanor and Rosamund meet, is worthy of special attention — an incident of remarkable dramatic intensity and interest. Tennyson, like Browning, made use of the dramatic monologue. His success with this form of

Portrayal of Character.

composition should be noted. *Ulysses* is a good example, also *St. Simeon Stylites;* note the first as an example of classic characterization, the second as a study of medievalism. Great dramatic force is attained in *The First Quarrel.* Most of the monologues in dialect, like *The Northern Farmer, The Grandmother, The Village Wife,* and *The Spinster's Sweet-Arts,* are humorous poems. In *The Northern Cobbler* we have an eccentric character but a serious theme.

Brief Bibliography. Good editions of Tennyson's poems are the Cambridge Edition (Houghton, Mifflin and Company) and *The Works of Tennyson* (1 vol., Macmillan). Numerous school editions of selected poems exist, among them Numbers 73, 99, 111 of the *Riverside Literature Series* — the first containing four of the *Idylls of the King,* the second *Enoch Arden* and other poems, the third *The Princess,* edited by W. J. Rolfe. *The Princess,* edited by A. S. Cook, in the *Standard English Classics* (Ginn), and *The Princess,* edited by A. J. George (Heath), are excellent text-books. The authoritative biography of the poet is the *Life of Alfred Tennyson* (2 vols.), by his son, Hallam Tennyson (Macmillan). In the *English Men of Letters Series* the *Tennyson* is by Alfred Lyall. There is a brief *Life of Tennyson* by A. Waugh (United States Book Company). Of the commentaries on Tennyson, *The Poetry of Tennyson,* by Henry van Dyke (Scribner), *Tennyson, his Art and his Relation to Modern Life,* by Stopford Brooke, and *A Tennyson Primer,* by W. M. Dixon (Dodd, Mead and Company), are especially recommended. *Tennyson's In Memoriam: Its Purpose and Structure,* by J. F. Genung (Houghton, Mifflin and Company), should be used in studying the Elegy. Refer to E. C. Stedman's *The Victorian Poets* (Houghton, Mifflin and Company). In studying *The Idylls of the King,* read *Tennyson's Idylls of the King and Arthurian Story,* by M. W. Maccallum (Macmillan), or *Tennyson's Idylls of the King,* by Harold Littledale (Macmillan). *Studies in Literature: Mr. Tennyson and Mr. Browning,* by Edward Dowden, will be useful for general reference upon

both these poets; also *The Great Poets and their Theology*, by Augustus H. Strong (American Baptist Publication Society).

The Minor Poets.

To the generation of Browning and Tennyson belong the numerous minor poets of the Victorian era: EDWARD FITZGERALD (1809–83), author of a remarkable version of *The Rubáiyát* of the Persian poet Omar Khayyám; ARTHUR HUGH CLOUGH (1819–61), the poet of spiritual unrest, of doubt and struggle, a friend of Matthew Arnold, and the subject of that poet's elegiac poem *Thyrsis;* DANTE GABRIEL ROSSETTI (1828–82), painter as well as poet, prominent among the Preraphaelite Brotherhood, author of *The Blessed Damozel* and *The House of Life.* WILLIAM MORRIS (1834–96), a *minor* poet only in comparison with the two great leaders of the era, was the most famous of the Preraphaelites. He introduced the spirit of art into the mechanic trades; and, like Ruskin, taught and practiced the principles of socialism in connection with his craft. His literary themes he found in the past. His first volume of lyrics, *The Defence of Guinevere* (1858), represents the romance of medievalism; *The Life and Death of Jason* (1867) is based on Grecian legend. His masterpiece, *The Earthly Paradise* (1870), is a collection of tales of many lands, north, south, east, and west, bound together in a romantic narrative, with all the art of the old French story-tellers, and not unlike that of Chaucer himself. Morris is the author, also, of a long series of prose romances, of which *The House of the Wolfings* and *The Land of the Glittering Plain* are perhaps the best known. Like the poems, these works are full of the dreamy medieval atmosphere which charmed his spirit, and are as much poetry as prose; they are imaginative, picturesque in the extreme, and almost archaic in their pure Saxon diction. In all these compositions he is as

pronounced a romanticist as Keats, creating works of beauty because he delights in beautiful creations, and illustrating perfectly the principle of art for art's sake.

Algernon Charles Swinburne (1837–1909) was the last of the Victorian poets. He was the author of many ballads, lyrics, epics, and dramas, and of some notable essays in criticism as well. His strongest work, the *Atalanta in Calydon* (1864), is modeled on the Greek tragedy. Swinburne is recognized as a master of technique in verse construction and of musical effect — one of the greatest masters of these qualities in our literature.

Prose and poetry — history, fiction, drama, essay — the flood of literature rolls on its continuous course. Just in the present we think we miss the broad, strong sweep of its earlier power; the energy of this age is perhaps finding its expression in other fields; the inspiration of its experience and achievements has not yet been felt; the *literature* of the new century has not yet begun. But the past is our heritage: what a heritage it is! what glorious minds these men possessed! what glorious souls! And these are forever our possession, in our books.

The End.

A CHRONOLOGICAL REVIEW OF IMPORTANT NINETEENTH CENTURY LITERATURE

1801–1825

Rulers.	Essayists.	Poets.		Novelists.
George III. (1760–1820).	Lamb (1770–1834). *Essays of Elia* (1820–22).	Wordsworth (1770–1850).	Scott (1771–1832).	Miss Edgeworth (1767-1849) *Belinda* (1801). Fashionable Tales (1809–12). *The Absentee* (1812).
	Landor (1775–1864). *Imaginary Conversations* (1821–35).	Coleridge (1772–1834).	Byron (1788–1824).	
	De Quincey (1785–1859). *Confessions of an Opium-Eater* (1821).	Southey (1774–1843). *Thalaba* (1801). *Ode to Dejection* (1802). *Madoc* (1805). *The Prelude* (1805). *Intimations of Immortality* (1806). *Curse of Kehama* (1810). *The Excursion* (1814).	Shelley (1792–1822). *Lay of the Last Minstrel* (1805). *Marmion* (1808). *English Bards* (1809). *Lady of the Lake* (1810). *Childe Harold* (1812). *The Giaour* (1813). *Queen Mab* (1813). *Alastor* (1815). *Manfred* (1817). *Prometheus Unbound* (1819). *Cain* (1821). *Adonais* (1821). *Don Juan* (1821–24).	Jane Austen (1775–1817). *Sense and Sensibility* (1811). *Pride and Prejudice* (1813).
	Hazlitt (1778–1830). Dramatic Literature (1821).			
	Jeffrey (1778–1850) in *Edinburgh Review*.			Scott (1771–1832). *Waverley* (1814). *Guy Mannering* (1815). *Old Mortality* (1816). *Heart of Midlothian* (1817) *Bride of Lammermoor* (1819). *Ivanhoe* (1819). *Kenilworth* (1821). *The Talisman* (1825).
	"Kit North" (1785–1854) in *Blackwood's Magazine* (1825).	Moore (1779–1852). *Lalla Rookh* (1817).		
George IV. (1820–30).	Lockhart (1794–1854) in *Quarterly Review* (1826).	Keats (1795–1821). First Volume (1817). *Endymion* (1818). Third Volume (1820.)		
	Macaulay (1800–59). *Essay on Milton* (1825).			

A CHRONOLOGICAL REVIEW OF IMPORTANT NINETEENTH CENTURY LITERATURE (CONTINUED)

1826–1850

Rulers.	Essayists.	Poets.	Novelists.	
William IV. (1830–37).	Carlyle (1795–1881). *Sartor Resartus* (1833). *The French Revolution* (1837). Macaulay's *Bacon* (1837). De Quincey's *Revolt of the Tartars* (1837). *Heroes and Hero Worship* (1840). *Essay on Warren Hastings* (1841). Ruskin (1819–1900). *Modern Painters*, 1st vol. (1843). De Quincey's *Joan of Arc* (1847). *The English Mail Coach* (1849). Macaulay's *History of England*, Vol. 1 (1849).	Tennyson (1809–92). *Poems by Two Brothers* (1827). *Poems, Chiefly Lyrical* (1830). *Poems by Alfred Tennyson* (1832). Browning (1812–89). *Pauline* (1832). *Paracelsus* (1835). *Sordello* (1840). *Pippa Passes* (1841). Tennyson's *Poems*, 2 vols. (1842). *Bells and Pomegranates* (1841–46). *The Princess* (1847). *In Memoriam* (1850).	Dickens (1812–70). *Pickwick Papers* (1837). *Oliver Twist* (1838). *Nicholas Nickleby* (1839). *Barnaby Rudge* (1841). *Old Curiosity Shop* (1841). *Dombey and Son* (1848). Thackeray (1811–63). *Vanity Fair* (1848). Charlotte Brontë (1816–55). *Jane Eyre* (1848). *Pendennis* (1849). *David Copperfield* (1850).	Scott *Woodstock* (1826). Disraeli (1804–81). *Vivian Grey* (1826). Bulwer (1803–73). *Pelham* (1828). *Paul Clifford* (1830). *Eugene Aram* (1832). *Last Days of Pompeii* (1834). *Rienzi* (1835). *Last of the Barons* (1843). *Harold* (1843). *The Caxtons* (1849).
Victoria (1837–1901).				

Essayists.	Poets.	Novelists-	
Carlyle's *Frederick the Great* (1858–65). *Modern Painters* (completed 1860). *Unto this Last* (1860). *Munera Pulveris* (1863). *Sesame and Lilies* (1865). *Crown of Wild Olive* (1866). Arnold (1822–88). *Essays in Criticism* (1865). *Culture and Anarchy* (1869). *Literature and Dogma* (1873). Ruskin's *Lectures on Art* (1870). *The Art of England* (1874). *Fors Clavigera* (1871–78). Pater (1839–94). *The Renaissance* (1873).	Tennyson's *Maud* (1855). Browning's *Men and Women* (1855). Mrs. Browning (1806–61). *Aurora Leigh* (1856). Morris (1834–96). *Defence of Guinevere* (1858). *Idylls of the King* (1859–72). *Enoch Arden* (1862). Swinburne's *Atalanta in Calydon* (1864). *The Ring and the Book* (1868–69). *The Earthly Paradise* (1870). *Balaustion's Adventure* (1871). *Fifine at the Fair* (1872). *The Inn Album* (1875). Tennyson's *Queen Mary* (1875).	*Henry Esmond* (1852). *Bleak House* (1853). *The Newcomes* (1855). *Little Dorrit* (1857). *The Virginians* (1858). George Eliot (1819–80). *Adam Bede* (1859). *Tale of Two Cities* (1859). *Mill on the Floss* (1860). *Silas Marner* (1861). *Great Expectations* (1861). *Romola* (1863). *Our Mutual Friend* (1865). *Felix Holt* (1866). *Middlemarch* (1872).	Reade (1814–84). *Peg Woffington* (1852). Mrs. Gaskell's *Cranford* (1853). Kingsley (1819–75). *Hypatia* (1853). *Westward Ho!* (1855.) *It's Never Too Late to Mend* (1856). Meredith's *Richard Feverel* (1859). Trollope's *Framley Parsonage* (1861). *The Cloister and the Hearth* (1861). *Hard Cash* (1863). *Small House at Allington* (1864). *Hereward the Wake* (1866) *Last Chronicle of Barset* (1867). *Put Yourself in His Place* (1870).

A CHRONOLOGICAL REVIEW OF IMPORTANT NINETEENTH CENTURY LITERATURE (CONTINUED)

1875–1900

RULER.	ESSAYISTS.	POETS.	MISCELLANEOUS WORKS.	NOVELISTS.
Victoria (1837–1901).	Bagehot's *Literary Studies* (1878). Arnold's *Discourses in America* (1885). Pater's *Marius* (1885). *Imaginary Portraits* (1887). Second Series *Essays in Criticism* (1888). *Appreciations* (1889). Ruskin's *Præterita* (1887).	Tennyson's *Harold* (1876). Browning's *Pacchiarotto* (1876). *Dramatic Idyls* (1880). *Becket; Ferishtah's Fancies* (1884). *Tiresias and Other Poems* (1885). *Locksley Hall Sixty Years After* (1886). *Parleyings with Certain People* (1887). *Demeter* (1889); *Asolando* (1890). Recent poems by Rudyard Kipling, William Watson, and Stephen Phillips.	*The New English Dictionary.* Vol. I. 1884. *The Dictionary of National Biography.* Vol. I. 1885.	Shorthouse's *John Inglesant* (1880). Stevenson (1845–94). *Treasure Island* (1883). *Kidnapped* (1886). *Master of Ballantrae* (1889). *David Balfour* (1893). Recent Novels by George Meredith, William Black, Thomas Hardy, Henry James.

Map showing places connected with
ENGLISH LITERARY HISTORY
Scale of Miles
0 10 20 40 60 80
HOUGHTON MIFFLIN CO., PUBLISHERS.
SCOTLAND
Edinburgh
Glasgow
Berwick-upon Tweed
LINDISFARNE
FARNE IS.
Warkworth Castle
NORTH-UMBERLAND
Blyth
Tynemouth
Newcastle
Monkwearmouth
Jarrow
Durham
Hartlepool
CUMBERLAND
WEST-MORELAND
DURHAM
Whitby
NORTH YORK MOORS
Scarborough
Hipswell
Richmond
Kirkby Malzeard
Ripon
Harrogate
Knaresborough
YORK
Flamborough Head
Pilmington
Sutton
Selby
Tadcaster
Wetherby
Wharfe
Ouse
Aire
Calder
Humber
Trent
Derwent
Tees
Swale
Ure
Nidd
Skipton
Keighley
Haworth
Bradford
Leeds
Halifax
Wakefield
Hull
Beverley
Driffield
Great Grimsby
Formby Pt.
LANCASHIRE
Liverpool
Manchester
Hampole
Sheffield
Doncaster
Pontefract
Barnsley
Rotherham
Retford
Worksop
Lincoln
Louth
Boston
Spalding
Grantham
Newark
Sleaford
Stamford
Peterborough
Wisbech
The Wash
Ely
Cambridge
Bedford
Northampton
Leicester
Derby
Nottingham
SHERWOOD FOREST
CHESTER
FLINT
DENBIGH
CAERNARVON
MERIONETH
ANGLESEY
Holyhead
HOLY I.
Menai Strait
Bangor
Carnarvon
Conway
Llandudno
Rhyl
Denbigh
Ruthin
Wrexham
Chester
Birkenhead
Runcorn
Warrington
Stockport
Macclesfield
Buxton
Ashbourne
Matlock
Chesterfield
Mansfield
Retford
Gainsborough
Lincoln
Boston
Spalding
Peterborough
Wisbech
Ely
Cambridge
Bedford
Northampton
Leicester
Derby
Nottingham
Grantham
Newark
Sleaford
Stamford
Louth
Beverley
Driffield
Great Grimsby
Hull
Selby
Tadcaster
Wetherby
Harrogate
Knaresborough
Ripon
Richmond
Skipton
Keighley
Haworth
Bradford
Leeds
Halifax
Wakefield
Pontefract
Barnsley
Rotherham
Doncaster
Hampole
Sheffield
Worksop
Retford
Gainsborough
Lincoln
Louth

WALES
RADNOR
CARDIGAN
HEREFORD
WORCESTER
WARWICK
NORTHAMPTON
HUNTINGDON
CAMBRIDGE
SUFFOLK
BEDFORD
PEMBROKE
CAERMARTHEN
BRECKNOCK
GLAMORGAN
MONMOUTH
GLOUCESTER
OXFORD
BUCKINGHAM
HERTFORD
ESSEX
MIDDLESEX
LONDON
Cardiff
Bristol
WILTSHIRE
BERKSHIRE
SURREY
KENT
SOMERSET
HAMPSHIRE
SUSSEX
DEVON
DORSET
CORNWALL
Plymouth
Dartmouth
Start Pt.
Portland Bill
I. OF WIGHT
Portsmouth
Selsey Bill
Beachy Head
Brighton
Southampton
Hartland Pt.
Lizard Pt.
Lands End
Eddystone L.H.
Tintagel
Camelford
Falmouth
Penzance
Dieppe
Boulogne
Calais
Dover
The Naze
North Foreland
River Thames
Strait of Dover
ENGLISH CHANNEL
FRANCE
ALDERNEY
GUERNSEY
SARK
CHANNEL ISLANDS
JERSEY
St. David's Head
Milford Haven
Bristol Channel
Barnstaple Bay
Ligger or Perran Bay
Mounts Bay
Bay
B Longitude West 4° from Greenwich C
D 0 Longitude East E

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